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Completely New Edition

What is Karate ?

Masutatsu Oyama

KARATE, the most essential of the arts of unarmed self-defense, is, among many other things, a protective, not an aggressive, technique. It should never be used violently or with intent to maim. Though the full depth of the meaning of the word "karate" is difficult to convey, in general, we can say that it is a rigid training of both the mind and the body. A developed karate technique gives power that should never be misused.

Karate is a training of the mind and body, but it is more. It calls for support on the deep and mysterious mental powers of man that are greater than modern science can comprehend. More than a sport, more than a system of defense, karate, in its most important aspect, is a way to serenity. The karate master and the trainee, who has worked for years with this semi-physical, semi-spiritual exercise, is a tranquil man. He is calm and unafraid in disaster because he has become accustomed to the idea that every step draws us closer to death. His whole being is concentrated on achieving serenity and on bringing others to that serene state with him.

What Is Karate?, in a completely new edition with over 1,000 photographs, is a valuable manual for both the beginner and the advanced student who would like to learn the real spirit of karate. In this book, Masutatsu Oyama, one of the world's most experienced karate experts and one of today's true karate authorities, explains thoroughly all of the karate fundamentals and actual techniques. When the former edition was first published, in 1958, it sold more than 150,000 copies to karate men and women everywhere. *What Is Karate?* now stands as a "must" book for anyone who intends to grasp the true meaning of karate.

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What is KARATE ?

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Karate ?

by MASUTATSU OYAMA

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foreword

In the ten years since Masutatsu Oyama first decided to do all he could to promote true karate education by publishing the first edition of What is Karate? *his efforts have born greater fruit than any of us could then have imagined they would. Today's worldwide interest in karate is the result of his fulfillment of what he regards as his heaven-sent mission and of his entire lifetime of superhuman devotion to his cause.*

Oyama's karate is based on the true essence of the Japanese spirit of the martial arts, and his clarion call to peoples everywhere to recognize the spiritual value of Oriental culture reverberates around the world. On another plane, when one sees him sincerely wrapped up in his daily instructions and educational activities, deep admiration is the only appropriate reaction.

In this completly re-written and re-designed edition of What is Karate?, *Oyama has once again expended all of his considerable powers on producing a book that will be just what the beginner needs in the hope of adding even one more devoted karate follower to the ever-growing number. This work is sure to be a splendid part of the physical and spiritual education of the youth of the world and a further step toward international harmony and peace.*

I want to take this opportunity to send Masutatsu Oyama my deepest admiration and congratulations on this fine new book and to request that he continue the fine work he has undertaken.

November 1966

Ryutaro Azuma
Governor of the Tokyo Metropolis
Counselor to the Kyokushinkai

preface

Ten years have flown quickly by since I issued the original version of What is Karate? *In that time, karate itself has spread all over the world with amazing speed. Letters of praise and congratulation from karate men and fans everywhere now overflow the box where I keep them as some of my most prized possessions. I have lived entirely for karate for the past 30 years, and rereading these letters not only recalled for me earlier days, but also served as an impetus to the publication of the current version of my book.*

I suppose that the time has now come for me, a man who trained strenuously all over the world relying solely on youth and strength, to stop and reflect on what has been. The person I was in those days had no thought for anything but his own training; nothing but karate ever entered his head. I would never have dreamed then that I might someday be a leader of others or write books. My only aim was developing my own strength, and to that end I would seclude myself in the mountains or travel anywhere to try my abilities against those of any strong man about whom I happened to hear.

While I continued to spend all my time this way, I heard that it might be a good thing if I pitted my own strength against that of a bull. To try my own power and to show clearly to everyone the might of karate, I decided to follow that suggestion and actually downed a bull with my own hands. At last, I was able both to demonstrate my own strength to the amazement of all and to convince people of the power karate can bring. To increase my own strength even further I resolved to do battle with even stronger bulls.

I vowed to test with my own body what the limits of human strength are. Though already at that limit, I continued severe and strenuous training, till surely I was stronger than anyone else. I realize now, however, that the karate I followed then was one of strength alone. It was lacking in real spiritual depth. Just as a human life that lacks a true philosophy is not worthy of the name, so a karate that is not built on truth, though it may possess strength, is not real karate. I then had to use my own intellect to learn the truth of human existence itself and to make that truth agree with the spiritual truth of karate.

Though the process was gradual, I learned to see things more clearly, and now, when I look back, I think perhaps that at last I had managed to unify my body and my spirit. After I had experienced with my own body the perfect union of flesh and spirit that is the true way of karate, the head priest of a Buddhist temple advised me thtpa erhaps my mission in life was to serve society by teaching karate to others. This, in addition to the repeated urgings of my friends, led me to decide to write a book on the subject.

Since then I have expended all my energy on becoming a rpoper karate leader and have specially emphasized the teaching of karate's spiritual aspects. Feeling that the time had come for me to offer to others the results of 30 years of karate living, last year I wrote This is Karate.

Although the book has received high praise as the encyclopedia of karate from people all over the world, I feel that the limited number of pages made it impossible for me to say in that book all that I wanted to say.

At the same time, I was aware of inadequacies in What is Karate? *and decided to take the opportunity to completely rewrite the older book and include in the new version some of the things that I feel* This is Karate *lacks, particularly some sections directed specifically to beginners. In fact, the most important aim of the present book is to explain to beginners exactly what true karate is and to help them master with their own bodies the correct training methods.*

*I am not a god, and probably this book is not perfect, but anyone who completely masters its contents should certainly have the powers of a lower-*dan *(grade) karate man. I intend this book for the beginners and* This is Karate *for more advanced readers. At present I am firming up plans for a third volume in which I will explain as much as I know of such advanced and highly specialized karate techniques as free-style practice fighting and the* tameshiwari, *or practice in breaking a variety of hard substances with the bare hands. When it is completed, I will have offered my readers as complete and thorough a course in how to grow and develop in correct karate as I can.*

Though explaining karate so that any beginner at all can understand it is no easy task, I have done all that my powers permit to set forth the proper way in a clear and easy-to-understand fashion.

I should like to take this chance to thank all of my many friends and fellow karate men everywhere for their numerous helpful ideas in connection with this book, the publication department of the Japan Publications Trading Co. who saw the entire project patiently through to its conclusion, to the photographer Akira Kotani, and to the model from my training hall Hideo Matsunaga for the long hours they spent in the studio, to others of my students who offered help, and finally to Richard L. Gage, who translated the manuscript into English.

October 1966

Mas Oyama

MASUTATSU OYAMA

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Author's Note

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A bare-handed duel between man and bull took place at Tateyama in Chiba Prefecture, October 1954.
Struggle ended in defeat of bull with Shuto death-blow by Grand Karate Master Mas. Oyama.

Karate defeating mad bull.

Always more vital to karate than techniques or strength is the spiritual element that lets you move and act with complete freedom. In striving to enter the proper frame of mind Zen meditation is of great importance. Though we say that this meditation involves a state of impassivity and complete lack of thought, we mean that through meditation we can overcome emotion and thinking and give freer reign to our innate abilities than ever before. The Zen state of selflessness is the same condition of disregard for selfish thoughts and concern for personal welfare that the artist experiences in the heart of creation. The man who wants to walk the way of karate cannot afford to neglect Zen and spiritual training.

Practice fighting is your best chance to put the basic elements you have learned into real action. Always bear two things in mind: you must approach practice fighting with the true martial-arts attitude of respecting what your opponent can do, and you must always strive to put what you know to best use.

Practice fighting demands that you bring together all that you have learned in daily training and that you crystalize your constant efforts to perfect your speed, strength, balance, and timing.

Practice fighting

Powerful arms and legs alone will not give you the crushing power you need for kicks, thrusts, and blocks. What you must have is a concerted, concentrated action on the part of every muscle in your body. Practice in the kicks, thrusts, and blocks is both a way to learn karate fundamentals and coordinated muscular training based on the theories of kinematics.

When you try the speed and strength your daily training has given you in breaking boards, tiles, or bricks, you are doing more than just measuring your own ability; you are also giving yourself a chance to reflect on the effects your training has had on both your mind and your body. When you see for yourself that you can break these objects, you know that your body is possessed of the speed and strength you were striving for. A karate that ignores breaking practice is no more useful than a fruit tree that bears no fruit.

It is exactly because karate trains you to use your entire body as a weapon that it is the most powerful of the martial arts. Among the parts of the body, the head possesses amazing destructive force. If you use it properly, it is easy for you to break fifteen roofing tiles with a single strike of your head, but you can only display this superhuman strength once you have rid yourself of the fear of striking something hard with your head and have advanced to an understanding of the true spirit of the martial arts.

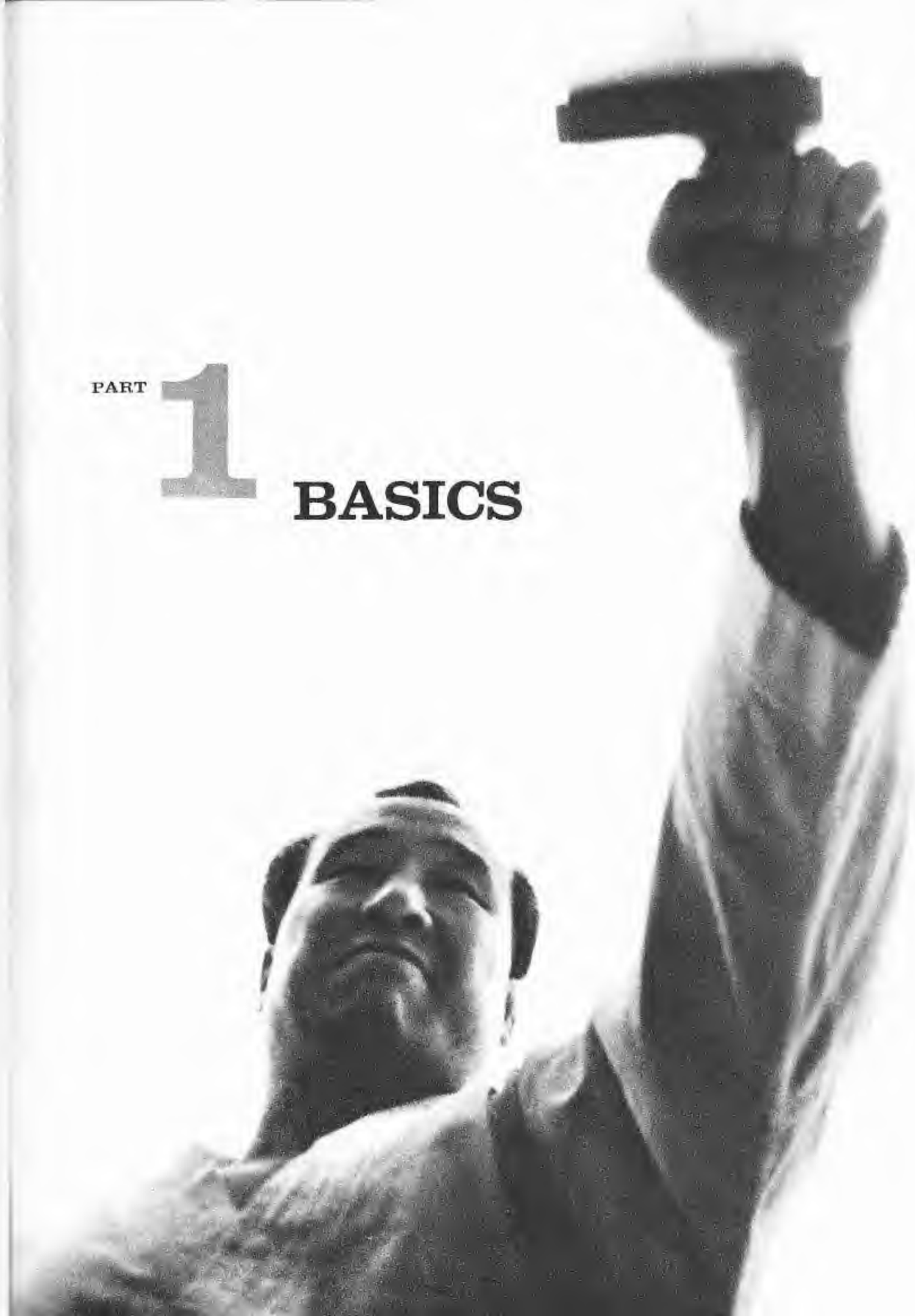
Karate *tameshiwari*

Though it seems impossible, with karate you can actually snap off the top of a beer bottle with your bare knife hand. Mastering the fundamentals and unflagging constant daily spiritual and bodily training will make the impossible possible for anyone.

Certainly breaking the neck of the beer bottle off and leaving the bottle standing is difficult, but constant karate training can help you develop speed and strength that surpass common sense.

PART 1

BASICS



1. introduction
2. karate weapons
3. thrusts
4. kicks
5. blocks
6. stances and breathing
7. daily training methods

CHAPTER

1 introduction

Probably everyone who picks this book up has seen in the movies or heard from someone of the menacing power of karate. That mystical speed and crushing strength you have heard of or seen are not magic. They are not a miracle but something that anyone can make his very own.

The source of karate's overwhelming effect in actual combat, from the standpoint of karate itself, is an accumulation, over a long period, of the ingenuity and wisdom of the people of the Orient. From the standpoint of the individual man engaged in karate, it is the result of constant daily physical and spiritual discipline.

I feel that for the sake of you people now beginning your karate careers I should, at this point, say a few words about the origin and the path of development to completion of this martial art.

1. Ancient Combat Techniques in the West

The oldest records we have concerning unarmed combat are hieroglyphics from the Egyptian pyramids where we find that Egypt's military men, in about 4000 B.C. (Old Kindgom), used fighting techniques that resemble modern boxing. Additional pictures representing something like boxing and wrestling turn up in the ruins of Sumer in Mesopotamia (about 3000 B.C.) and in the remains of Bein Hasan in Egypt (about 2300 B.C.).

These fighting techniques crossed over to Greece by way of Crete, and we find them described by Homer in the twenty-third book of the Illiad. Matches then were rough affairs determined often by the death of one member. According to one account Theogenes, a boxing champion of the fifth century B.C., knocked out 2,102 opponents, of whom 1,800 died. Another tale has it that Milon, the greatest of Greek wrestlers, carried a bull once around the Olympia Stadium, killed it with a single blow, and ate it all himself.

Though a distinction existed between wrestling and boxing in those early times, such irregularities as striking the opponent in what was ostensibly a wrestling match or strangling him in a so-called boxing bout were common. By combining the two types of fighting, the Greeks developed the pancratium in which no such thing as a foul existed and the entire body served as a weapon. Though the Greeks themselves soon found the pancratium too cruel and abandoned it, in the period of the Empire, the Romans revived it. Though the pancratium was similar to karate used in serious combat, we can only wonder what it would have become had it continued to the present.

2. Combat Techniques in Ancient India

We may suppose that in the thirtieth century B.C. the Indians used hand combat methods, and we know that in the time of the Buddha fighting abilities were considered the necessary accomplishments of warrior and priest alike. Several Buddhist documents record three types of combat: reverse techniques, exchanges of blows, and combined strikes. The founder of the Zen sect Bodhidharma carried Indian fighting techniques into China, where he combined them with the breathing methods used in Zen and Yoga. These breathing methods had a great influence on the *ibuki* method of breathing used in karate today.

3. Chinese Fighting Techniques

As early as 3000 B.C., the Chinese had a sort of physical training, intimately connected with *kempo*, the famous Chinese hand-to-hand combat method. *Kempo* itself we suppose came into systematized form no later than the twentieth century B.C. In the third century, a famous surgeon created a combat method that was a combination of the older physical training and *kempo*. He based his new method on the movements of five types of animal: the tiger, the bear, the deer, the monkey, and birds.

4. Karate and Resistance Movements

This typically Chinese idea continued on, and I feel that we should pay particular attention to the fact that the ancient Chinese *kempo* used many circular movements, just as we do in our karate

today.

The techniques brought to China by Bodhidharma became known as Shaolin-ssu *kempo* and were gradually unified. Shaolin-ssu *kempo* traveled into many other countries when the Chinese had wars with them and fell under the influences of the local fighting techniques in Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, and other places. For instance Mongolian fighting centers on knee kicks, whereas Korean fighting uses mostly elbow and hand thrusts. It is interesting to note that the Koreans also use a semi-mystical training method called *chu-ryuk*, in which the competitor relies on the strength of something outside his own body to give him power.

Karate, the fighting method that requires no weapons, is the fighting method for those whose weapons have been taken away or who are forbidden weapons. Throughout Oriental history many instances occur in which the people have risen to resist authority using only their empty hands.

When the Yuan Dynasty was in power, 150 thousand unarmed Chinese people arose in revolt. Later, 80 thousand, using their hands and *kempo* as their only weapons, revolted against the Ch'ing Dynasty. Still later, in the nineteenth century, secret organizations like the Ta-tao-hui (Big Sword Society) formed into an uprising against the Germans stationed on the Shantung Peninsula. This movement, allied with other unrest throughout the nation, was soon to become the I-ho-ch'uan, or the Boxer Rebellion, so called because of the hand-to-hand combat techniques the rebels used.

Of course, Mao Tse-tung's insistence on hand-to-hand unarmed fighting in guerrilla warfare is now famous.

5. Okinawa-te

Okinawa, one of the Ryukyu Islands located about equidistant between China and Japan, has long had its own particular brand of unarmed combat which the Okinawans call *te*, or hand. Naturally, when the Okinawans were in commercial contact with China, their *te* came in contact with and fell under the influence of Chinese *kempo*. In the seventeenth century, when Japanese feudal lords conquered the Ryukyu Islands and the people lost all other weapons, the study of *te* became more and more popular. What we today call karate is a blend of the Okinawan *te* techniques which crossed into Japan and merged with Japanese jujutsu.

6. Japanese Jujutsu

The oldest Japanese combat method, called *sekoi* later developed into the wrestling style known as *sumo*. During the internal disturbances of the thirteenth century, jujutsu broke away from the sumo and developed a canon of techniques including reversals, strikes, strangle holds, and throws. In the seventeenth century, a scholar who had fled from China introduced Chinese *kempo* to the Japanese. At that time, all of the unarmed combat martial arts were unified. The division into *karate*, *judo*, *aijutsu*, and *aikido* is a product of the twentieth century. Japanese unarmed combat is characterized by a low, big position.

What we now call karate is a composite based on the Okinawa-*te* introduced into Japan, in 1922, by Gichin Funakoshi, and the best points taken from Japanese *jujutsu*, Korean *chuto*, ancient Chinese *kempo*, and modern *judo*. Karate also has a deep spiritual tradition and background.

Thus, then, is a brief history of karate, from which I want to emphasize more strongly the importance of the breathing methods derived from karate's Indian origin, the smooth rounded movements derived from its Chinese origin, and the low-hip stance derived from its Japanese origin. I can say from experience that all of these are most rational elements.

Although many people consider the Orient a land of mysticism and irrationality, the elements of karate we have just mentioned are in line with rational thinking even if we examine them under the light of modern science. This is a tradition it is impossible to despise. Our duty is to operate from this tradition as a basis and study and make even greater progress.

I hope those of you beginning in karate will not think of it as something mystic or magical. On the other hand, through practice and reading I do want you all to study and learn the genuine profound spiritual background of karate, because in this way you will be able to strengthen your own bodies and spirits so that you can be of service to your neighbors, your societies, and your countries.

CHAPTER

2 karate weapons

Since karate is literally what the name means, fighting with empty hands, it demands that we transform the whole human body into a weapon and use it effectively. To reach the stage where it is possible to use all parts of the body, down to one single finger, as a powerful weapon, we must know the proper way to handle our bodies.

Since olden times, it has been said that the karate grip requires three years to learn, the standing method another three years, and the thrusting method still another three. In other words, making a powerful weapon of the body is the most important of all karate basics. Completely and correctly mastering this basic requires intensive training, and, as I tell all of my students, the very act of mastering it is the road to an understanding of karate's inner essence.

An old Japanese proverb used to show the deepest meaning of the Japanese military art of fencing (*kendo*) says, "If the sword is true, the heart is true; and if the heart is true, the sword is true." In the sense that the heart of the man who holds the sword is manifest in the sword itself, this maxim applies to karate where the weapon that replaces the *kendo* sword is the human body. For this reason, the karate man must take proper and good care of his body. I emphasize the care and training of the body to all beginning students because the body as a weapon is so vital to karate. All students must learn how to care for their bodies and must understand how to make of their bodies accurate and powerful karate weapons.

1. principle weapons: hands

In my long experience I have noticed that a large number of beginners entertain some highly mistaken ideas. For instance, many are under the grave misconception that in the fist and knife hand it is sufficient to strengthen only the skin and flesh of the striking area. This is completely wrong, of course, since without the cooperation of the wrist, arm, elbow, and shoulder the fist or the knife hand completely lack the destructive force of a weapon. You must always remember that logical training of the entire body and correct coordination of all the body parts are essential to the development of effective karate weapons.

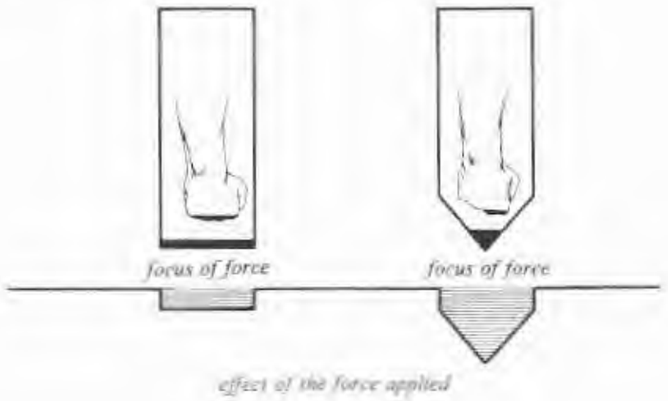
how to make a proper fist

forefist (*seiken*)

To grip your hand into a proper forefist, the most frequently used and important of the karate weapon positions, fold all four of your fingers in as tight as you can, and clamp your thumb down on top of them hard. By folding your fingers in firmly you both protect the joints at the fingers' bases and give tension to your wrist. Pay particular attention to the little finger, which has the tendency to dangle and separate from the fist.

The striking edge, or the part of the forefist that contacts the object to be struck, is the most important area. We always strike with what is called the head of the fist (*kentō*), that is, the base knuckles of the forefinger and middle finger. This is the basic theory of the forefist.

I imagine that many of you know something about the supernatural destructive powers karate can develop. For instance, it is possible for a small man to down a man twice his size or for a human to deal a single crushing blow that brings to the ground a bull twenty times the man's size. This power depends on the way you clench your fist, on the proper power distribution, and on the correct thrusting methods. The following chart shows in easy-to-grasp terms how this destructive power works.



incorrectly formed fists

1. If you leave your thumb stretched out, the fist looses compactness and strength.
2. If you fold your thumb in, you will not develop proper strength in your arm and wrist, and you can easily damage your thumb base knuckle when you strike.
3. If you do not fold in your index finger, your little finger and your fourth finger can easily slacken and block strength from your wrist.

inverted fist (*uraken*)

The fist is formed in the same way and the striking area is the same as that of the forefist, but when we use it we simply turn it upside down. The inverted fist is useful in an upward thrust that resembles an uppercut and in striking both to the right and left. When we practice inverted fist techniques we should be careful to train thoroughly in rotating the fist to the outside at the instant of contact. We also use the inverted fist in a large number of descending strikes.

fist edge (*tettsui*)

Though the fist is gripped in the same way as the forefist, the striking zone is the thick area at the base of the little-finger side of the hand. Since the striking zone is the same in this and in the knife hand, it is a good idea to practice the two together.

knife hand (*shuto*)

The knife hand is one of karate's most powerful and important hand positions. Since the striking zone is a fleshy part of the hand it is easy to learn and easy to use, but if we do not practice it carefully we run a great risk of doing injury to our hands.

We form the knife hand by bending and tensing the whole hand without letting the little finger separate from the other fingers. Be sure that all of your fingers stay tightly together and that they are not bent out too straight. The three essential methods of using the knife hand make it an extremely powerful and destructive hand position, but if it is used carelessly and badly the man using it can harm his hand.

The first important way to use the knife hand is the descending strike from straight above, as you see it done in photograph A.

The second important method is to push the hand outward slightly at the moment of contact. (See B.)

The third method is to pull the hand slightly inward towards you at the moment of contact. (See C.)

inner knife hand (*haito*)

When properly done, the inner knife hand is actually easier to use than the knife hand, but it can be the cause of serious injury if you do not use it correctly. To form the inner knife hand we stretch our fingers straight out and bend the thumb under the hand tightly so that it stays in contact with the palm. Look closely at the photograph to learn the proper striking zone. This fist position is used both with the palm up and with the palm down.

palm heel (*shotei*)

This hand position is useful in both attacks and blocks. It serves in both inside and outside blocks against kicks and thrusts and frequently in attacks to the stomach and to the face. When we use it in strikes it is essential to tense all five fingers.

wrist (*koken*)

This position too is very effective in both blocks and attacks though its attack applications are much more common in Chinese boxing (*kempo*) than in general karate. We can use it in descending strikes, rising strikes, inside strikes, and outside strikes. Because in this case we use the wrist where a number of the peripheral nerves come together, this position can cause injuries to your hand. Be sure that you keep the wrist well bent inward and that you put all the force in the striking zone. Though this position is not commonly used, we should not forget it because it can be most effective.

thumb one-finger fist (*oyayubi ipponken*)

Here again we have a fist position that, though not in common use, is a highly advantageous one to know. It is formed as the forefist is, except that in this case we bend the thumb and press its tip hard down on the second knuckle of the forefinger. Because when used in strikes to the spot below the ear or to the temple this blow can cause instantaneous death, its use in such strikes is strictly forbidden in karate matches. Nonetheless, since the position can pack terrific power, it is good to learn it.

spear hand (*nukite*)

The most correct way to form this hand position is not to stretch the fingers out competely straight, but to bend them slightly at the first knuckles, because you cannot get as much strength in your fingers if you stretch them straight out.

chicken's beak (*keiko*)

This hand position is widely used in China and in Southeast Asia, particularly in Chinese fighting forms. Bring all five fingers together in a point, and tense the tips of them.

half-clenched fist (*hiraken*)

Fold your thumb well in and the rest of your fingers at the second knuckle. Hold them all tightly into the palm. You strike to your opponent's face with the palm area, largely from the side, and to the ear area.

elbow (*hiji*)

No other position gives as much power as this one, but because we strike with the elbow zone, the position's range is highly limited. It is, however, most effective when your opponent is at extremely close distance. The position is useful in upper, inside, outside, and descending strikes, and in elbow strikes to the chin, or stomach.

2. principle weapons: feet

Though the number of karate weapons formed with the feet is smaller than those formed with the hands and though we are not as likely to hurt or injure our feet as readily because the skin and flesh on them tends to be tougher, do not forget that, just as in the case of the hand strikes, in foot strikes too you need the cooperation of the ankle, the knee, and the thigh to generate the terrific force you want. This is particularly true in the case of the ankle snap. In all of the foot techniques and kicks a strong ankle and an effective ankle snap are most important.

knife foot (*sokuto*)

The knife foot, generally used in side kicks, has an effect similar to that of the knife hand.

instep (***haisoku***)

We use the instep in kicking to our opponent's groin or in kicking to his stomach, face, ears, or ribs as we turn our own bodies.

When you use the instep, be sure to add a snap to your movements. The snap requires that your ankle be strong. Remember to keep all of your toes together and to tense them at the moment of contact. You can think of this weapon as similar to the inverted fist.

heel (***kakato***)

We use the heel in kicking at an opponent who has fallen.

We use the heel in kicking at an opponent who has fallen or in kicks to the rear. When you kick with your heel, make good use of the spring in your knee. Drive in with your heel with the sensation that you are going to leave it momentarily at the point of contact. Flexibility in your ankles is of the utmost importance in heel techniques. The heel corresponds in effect to the palm heel.

knee (***hiza***)

We use the knee to attack to the groin, face, or ribs of an opponent who has grabbed us. We also sometimes pull our opponent's head downward and strike it with our knees.

The muscle that supplies the main force for the knee kicks is in the thigh. To use your knee effectively you must have strong hips. When you kick with the knee, be sure to keep your toes pointed downward. The knee is similar in effect to the elbow.

ball of the foot (***chusoku***)

This position is effective in front kicks to the opponent's stomach or in roundhouse kicks to the chin or ribs.

When you use the ball of the foot, be sure to keep your toes bent back as far as possible because doing so strengthens the contact zone. Kicks with the ball of the foot demand a powerful spring action in your knee. The ball of the foot is similar in effect to the forefist.

3. head

Though the head thrusts occur infrequently in karate, they are of great interest as they turn up often in North China, Korea, Mongolia, and Russia. Though too much use of these head techniques is not good for the body, they are effective in close-range fighting, because the comparatively heavy head, can generate unbelievable concentrations of power.

head thrusts

Because of their great effect, head thrusts are frequently most useful when the chips seem to be down.

In general, we can divide head thrusts into two categories:

Head-on thrusts

Left or right thrusts

Two other thrusts of interest are the back thrust for use when an opponent has seized us from behind and the upward thrust for use as we rise from a seated position to a standing one.

CHAPTER

3 thrusts

main points

Thrusts are so important in karate that they are almost synonymous with karate itself. The secret of their destructive power lies in the twist we give our hand at the instant of impact. You can understand this if you have ever tried to make a hole in something with a hand drill. Unless the bit goes round and round, making a hole is impossible. Adding a twist to our hand at the impact instant in a thrust is an application of the same principle. The twist greatly increases the power of the thrust, so that with only a little strength a thrust can generate great power. For further comment on this twist, see Chapter Five, Blocks.

Another important point is to always remember to thrust as if with the strength of your entire body, not just with that of your wrist and arm. Karate's great source of power is the circle, and in the case of the thrusts, the shoulder is the center of the circle from which strength flows into the fist. Consequently, the force must flow on a straight line from the shoulder to the part of the fist that is the striking zone. In the case of the forefist we make the base knuckles of the forefinger and the middle finger the points of contact because if we were to use the knuckles of all of the fingers the wrist would turn inward, and the force would travel along a bent, not a straight, line. The force of the thrust would then be lost. Remember: in thrusts the force should always flow in a straight line from the shoulder to the point of contact.

forefist middle thrust (*seiken chudan-tsuki*)

This is karate's most basic technique for attacking the solar plexus because it has all of the main elements that are included in all the other techniques. In other words, mastering the forefist middle thrust will bring to your body power distribution, a proper straddle, body balance, and a sense of speed.

When you practice, perform thrusts first with the right and then with the left fists.

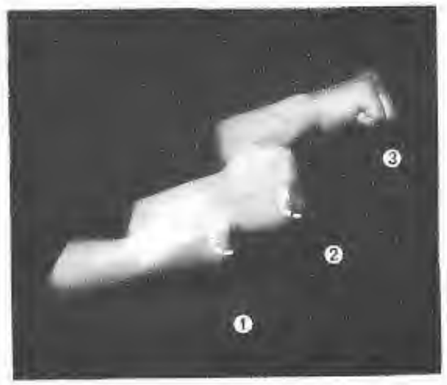
First make two forefists, and stretch your arms out straight in front of you bringing your hands together thumb to thumb. This position is the location at which you will thrust. Next invert your right fist, and quickly draw it in to a position just outside the nipple on your right side. Leave your left fist as it is. Now return your right fist to a top-up position, and thrust it out to its former position. As you thrust with your right fist, invert your left, and bring it quickly to a position just outside your left nipple. It is important to pull your arms back strongly as if you were striking with your elbows at an opponent standing behind you, because speed in the back arm will increase both speed and strength in the thrusting arm. This is easy to understand from a physiological point of view. The reactionary force of the arm travelling in a direction opposite to that of the thrusting arm, increases the thrusting arm's force. To test the necessity for speed in the back arm try the following simple experiment.

Stretch one arm out forward, and swing it around and around with all your might. Now stretch both arms out, and swing them both round and round. You can easily tell that the counter forces involved when you swing both arms add a great deal more speed and power to the motion. Master this principle thoroughly because it applies to the blocks, strikes, and all the other techniques as well as to the thrusts.

Another point to note in practicing thrusts is not to hurry, but to perform each thrust in such a way as to check what you are doing. Allow about a second between thrusts. I am repeating myself somewhat, but I want to re-emphasize the importance of power in the stroke of the arm your are pulling back. Since the withdrawn arm is immediately to become the thrusting arm, make preparations for that changeover by thinking of thrusting practice as a continuous movement. I call the withdrawn arm the "living" arm, and I always teach my students that it is just as important as the thrusting arm.

The forefist upper thrust (*seiken jodan-tsuki*) and the forefist lower thrust (*seiken gedan-tsuki*) are exactly like the middle thrust except that in the upper one you aim at your opponent's head area and in the lower one at his stomach.

In all of these techniques, do not overtense your shoulders. You must make sure that all power is concentrated in your fist at the moment of impact, but if you tense your shoulders, your movements will become sluggish, and you will be unable to hit your mark accurately.



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It is more effective not to extend your arm fully, as you see in the photograph, when you perform a forefist thrust. Bending your arm more than the model in the photograph reduces your thrust's effect.

right-left inverted-fist strike
(*uraken sayu-uchi*)

This technique is used for striking sideways at an opponent. Your fists should be back at about nipple height in the center of your chest. Snap the striking hand back to its original position immediately after impact.

THRUSTS · 43

forefist strike to the chin
(seiken ago-uchi)

In the chin strike, used in attacking an opponent's head area, snap your fist back immediately after the strike. The withdrawn fist in this case stays put in front of your shoulder.

forefist roundhouse strike
(seiken mawashi-uchi)

In this technique you strike as you make a semicircle with your fist, keeping your elbow always bent. The basic practice for this strike is the same as that for the forefist strike. Aim for your opponent's temple. The withdrawn fist behaves just as it does in the forefist strike.

front inverted-fist strike
(uraken shomen-uchi)

Invert both fists, and keep both elbows close to the front of your chest. Leaving your fist inverted, strike at your opponent's face. Snap the striking fist back to its original position at the instant of contact. Of course, all movements must be fast.

knife-hand strike to the face
(shuto gammen-uchi)

The striking hand travels in a circle from the area behind your ear to the opponent's temple. Without letting your hand swing outward, strike clean and direct. Halt the striking hand on contact, and when you strike with your other hand join the two, and bring them back together. Tense your abdomen firmly enough that your body does not totter. Knife-hand strikes to the spleen are done in this same way.

inverted-fist strike to the spleen
(uraken hizo-uchi)

This technique is used to strike sideways to your opponent's spleen. At the moment of contact twist your hand slightly to the outside, then snap it back to your body immediately.

upper elbow strike
(hiji jodan-uchi)

Bend your elbow firmly, and with a spring in your hips strike from the outside inward to your opponent's face. Keep your withdrawn arm pulled in tight. Using the same basic elements, you can also strike to your opponent's abdomen.

knife-hand strike to the collarbone
(shuto sakotsu-uchi)

This strike swings down from above to your opponent's collarbone. At the moment of contact pull your withdrawn hand in tight, and twist your hips slightly to concentrate all your strength in the striking hand.

driving knife-hand strike to the collarbone
(shuto sakotsu-uchikomi)

If, for instance, your opponent has you by the collar, you can deliver a straight-line driving knife-hand strike to his collarbone. In this case, have a firm stance and a completely stable lower body.

rising elbow strike
(hiji age-uchi)

Using a method similar to what you use in the elbow strike, putting your whole body's counter forces into the blow, aim an elbow uppercut at your opponent's chin.

two-hand thrust
(morote-tsuki)

We generally use this thrust with the right and left hands simultaneously in the forefist middle thrust to the abdomen, but it is possible to use it with one fist to the face and the other to the abdomen. In such cases, use an inverted fist to strike to the abdomen.

Chinese thrusting methods

Unfortunately, though many elements in modern karate stem historically from Chinese *kempo*, too many karate men overlook *kempo* entirely. *Kempo* itself, based on the movements of animals, is an extremely logical method of both attack and defense. It also features the theory of circular motion, a fundamental of karate.

For your reference, we will include in this chapter only some of the Chinese *kempo* thrusting methods. An emphasis on agility in both attack and defense movements makes *kempo* a highly battle-oriented martial art. In the technique we are illustrating you use your arm to break your opponent's attack and immediately use that same arm in your own attack.

1. double-arm upward thrust

In this thrust, one of the most characteristic of Chinese *kempo* thrusting techniques, put your elbows together to cover the central part of the body. Open both hands so that you can either seize your opponent's attacking fist or dodge it to the side. In an attack as you strike straight forward grip your fist, and turn your arm.

2. upper thrust

This thrust is frequently used when your opponent attacks to the abdomen. You block the attacking fist with your palm heel, then grip your hand, and thrust to your opponent's chin. For a highly accurate thrust, your fist grip will be right on the mark if your target is as close as possible.

3. parrying thrust

Should your opponent strike to your face, use either the knife hand or the inner knife hand to parry that attacking hand to another direction, then attack with either the wrist or the forefist. This method is particularly close to the *kempo* method of diverting the direction of an attack and then seizing the attacking hand and counter attacking.

side view of 1.

When your opponent thrusts to your chest, thrust gripping your fist and describing a large circle to break the opponent's thrust's strength and to change its direction. Concentrate all the power of your entire body in your fist by twisting it slightly at the moment of contact. By putting all your strength in your fist at that split second, you economize on speed and balance and increase the amount of power in the strike.

4. forward thrust

If we always make a circular motion and always twist our fists at the moment of contact, we greatly increase the impact strength and are easily able to achieve correct timing with no waste.

CHAPTER

4 kicks

main points

Kicks pack about five times as much destructive force as hand blows, and about 70% of all karate techniques use them. On the other hand, in comparison with the arms, the feet, though powerful, lack speed. In addition, since in all kicks except the flying kick one foot must remain on the floor for support, kicks are inferior in balance. Effective use of kicks demands that we give thought to ways to make up for these two deficiencies. If the body is out of balance, kicking techniques lose from 60%–70% of their power. Because your opponent can grab and hang on to your kicking leg if it lacks speed, slowness in these techniques can be fatal. The most important factor in the kicking techniques is to kick strong and fast and to snap your leg back the same way.

Keeping your body balanced always on a straight vertical line is important; that is, you must keep the upper half of your body and your supporting leg always in a straight line vertical to the floor. The kicking leg swings outward in a semicircle from this straight line. If you cannot kick this way, your body will lose its balance. If the upper half of your body inclines to the back in the kick, any force applied to you will be able easily to knock you over, and if your opponent grabs your kicking leg, you will be absolutely unable to get away from him. Moreover, even if your kick hits the mark, if half of your body's strength inclines to the rear, the power of your kick diminishes by half.

Leaning the top half of your body forward is just as bad, because then your face juts to the front and becomes an easy target for your opponent's attack. If the line of your body's center of gravity leans forward, the arc through which your kicking leg will travel decreases, and the power of your kick diminishes accordingly. In addition, you will lose your balance when you attempt to return your leg after a kick if the upper half of your body inclines forward. As we have already said, and as we shall repeat over and over, in karate balance and stability are of the utmost importance. To develop speed, balance is essential; to develop balance, speed is essential. The two are completely inseparable.

Make sure you understand these points thoroughly and that you apply them carefully when you practice kicks.

front kick (*mae-geri*)

Kick to your opponent's abdomen with the ball of your foot. First put a good bend in the knee of the kicking leg, raise that knee as high as you can, keeping the lower part of the leg relaxed. Next snap the lower part of your leg out sharp and hard. The two main movements in the kick, then, are the bending and raising of the knee and the outward snap with the lower part of the leg, but when you actually kick you must perform the two together as one rapid movement. When you bring the kicking leg back, bend it first, then lower it, because this enables you to recover your leg quickly and without disturbing your body's balance. When you practice, each kick must be rapidly, but completely, performed. Leave a one-second interval between kicks. Be careful not to let the heel of your supporting leg leave the floor while you kick.

groin kick (*kin-geri*)

Just as in the preceding kick, first bend your knee, and using the knee as your fulcrum, kick out toward your opponent's groin with the instep of your foot. In the recovery, leaving your knee in the position it is in at the moment of the kick, first bring your foot back to you, then lower it to the floor. Once again, be sure that in both the kick and in the recovery you perform the two basic movements quickly as one. Practice carefully, kick after kick, and leave about a one-second interval between kicks.

knee kick (*hiza-geri*)

We use the knee either to strike the opponent's abdomen or to drive into his face after we have grabbed his head and pulled it down into the striking range of the knee. Bend your knee way back, and thrust upward with the fleshy area above the kneecap. If your hips are out of balance in this technique the heel of the supporting foot will come off the floor. Be sure to tense your hips and keep steady. Be careful also that your upper body leans neither forward nor backward.

side kick (*yoko-geri*)

This straight-line kick to the side of the body's central line of balance is directed to the opponent's abdomen or neck. First bring the sole of your kicking foot to about the inside of the knee of the supporting leg, and then kick with knife foot straight out to the side. When you kick to the side, do it with the idea of a semicircle in mind. Always keep your big toe bent up as far as possible and your heel jutting outward so as to tighten the muscles in your foot. Once again think of the movement in bringing the kicking leg up and that in the actual kick as a single rapid flowing motion. Recover the kicking leg just as you do in the front kick.

side high kick (***yoko-keage***)

In this side high kick to your opponent's chin you quickly and powerfully raise your knife foot to the side without bending the knee of the kicking leg. Be careful to keep your supporting leg as straight as you can and to avoid leaning your upper body to the side or to the back. Do not raise the heel of your supporting foot from the floor.

ankle kick (***kansetsu-geri***)

We use the ankle kick to strike at the opponent's knee from the front, back, or side. As in the side kick, we first raise the kicking foot to about the knee of the supporting leg and then, combining a snap in the kicking leg and a spring in the supporting one, kick outward. Keep the big toe of the kicking foot bent back and the heel jutting out.

roundhouse kick (*mawashi-geri*)

In this outside roundhouse kick with the instep to the opponent's upper body be sure that the supporting leg firmly maintains your body's balance. Bend the knee of your kicking leg, and raise it as high as you can. Using your knee as the fulcrum, keep the lower part of your leg parallel with the floor. Your foot should be at a diagonal with the floor. Twist your hips so that the ball of your kicking foot swings into your opponent. The heel of your supporting foot must not move.

roundhouse kick to the neck (*mawashi-kubi-geri*)

This kick to the throat and neck with the instep is performed exactly like the roundhouse kick, but the semicircular movement of the kicking foot is more effective the faster you perform it. Do not bend your support leg or your kicking leg.

back kick (*ushiro-geri*)

This kick serves in striking the abdomen of an opponent on whom your back is turned. The main points are similar to those in the roundhouse kick. First raise your leg, and then snap it straight back. Turn your heel inward at the instant of contact. Keep your balance by leaning the upper half of your body forward as you kick. Tense your abdomen, and keep your body hard.

heel kick (*kakato-geri*)

This is a sort of stamping downward kick with the heel. Just as in the front kick, bend the knee of the kicking leg, and raise it as high as you can before you drive a powerful downward kick with the heel of the kicking foot. At the instant when the foot comes in contact with your opponent put the same kind of twist into it that you use in the forefist thrust to greatly increase the effect of the kick. Perform the raising of the knee and the downward kick rapidly as a single motion. Be careful to balance your upper body with your supporting leg, since the downward kicking motion has a marked tendency to unstabilize your position.

jumping front kick (*tobi-mae-geri*)

In this technique we are in the position for a front kick, but we jump as high as we can, and when we have reached the pinnacle of our jump, we kick with our instep to the opponent's face or neck. Since when you recover from the jump you can easily lose your balance, you must jump as high as you can. Be sure you bring the kicking foot back into your body before you land. Land as gently as possible on the tips of the toes of both feet. Jump from a standstill; do not make a preparatory run. The jumping side kick is done in the same way except that you kick to the side.

CHAPTER

5 blocks

main points

In karate, the block and the attack are one. Since the block leads directly into the attack, a perfect block means an effective attack. In general, people practice blocking with extremely mistaken ideas and extremely mistaken methods. This is not only highly dangerous, it is also at odds with the real spirit of karate.

For instance, a glance at a middle or lower block leads one to believe that since the area used is wide the block is easy to do. In fact, however, whether you use the area near the wrist or the fleshy part near the elbow in these blocks makes a great deal of difference. If we consider the theory of the fulcrum we can easily understand that the part of the arm nearest the elbow is stronger and more effective. Of course, in addition, impact in a block is less in fleshy areas. Indeed, though a block may seem simple, actually studying it closely down to the fine points clearly reveals how difficult it can be. The essence of the block is to block on any point of a circle that you describe with your arm.

First of all, let us take as an easy-to-understand example a block against an attack that descends from above, as the one in the chart does. A block like that in chart A is possible in which the blow strikes the blocking arm at right angles, but in this case the blocking arm must receive all of the force of the attack. If the attack has a force of, say, 1,000 it is clearly disadvantageous to have to absorb that entire force. Inclining the arm as in chart B, however, so that the force strikes at a 35-degree angle, splits the force of the attack. If we speak in terms of concrete mathematics, we see that when the arm is angled at 35 degrees it splits the force of the attack. If that force is 1,000, the sine of 35 degrees is 0.574. In other words, the force of 1,000 is reduced to a force of 574. The 35-degree angle implies a circle. Moreover, by revolving the arm itself as you raise it, the double movement further increases the power and effect of the block.

In the case of the middle block, using the same theory, we see that we must naturally fend the thrust by describing a circle from the outside, or the block loses its effect. If we attempt to block in a straight line the force of the impact increases, particularly if the attacker is strong. In such cases, a straight-line block leads to the danger of serious injury to the blocker. To avoid this, the blocking arm should describe a large circle as it blocks (See Chart C). This is circular movement no. 1. Circular movement no. 2, also of great importance, is a circle the elbow of the blocking arm makes at the instant of contact. This movement of the elbow must coincide with a twist in the blocker's hips. If you use both these circular movements you can easily parry your opponent's attack and quickly move into an attack yourself.

Circular movements must be as quick as possible. Since its repelling force is great and the diameter of its movement circle small, circular movement no. 2 is highly effective, but the key to its success or failure is timing. Timing and a mastery of it are all important. The theory of circular movement is vital to all the techniques. As we mentioned in the section on thrusts, it is important to twist the thrusting fist at the moment of contact. This is a circular movement. In roundhouse strikes and kicks we move in a circle based on a point. The whole truth is that we must never forget that movement in a circle based on a point always generates greater power.

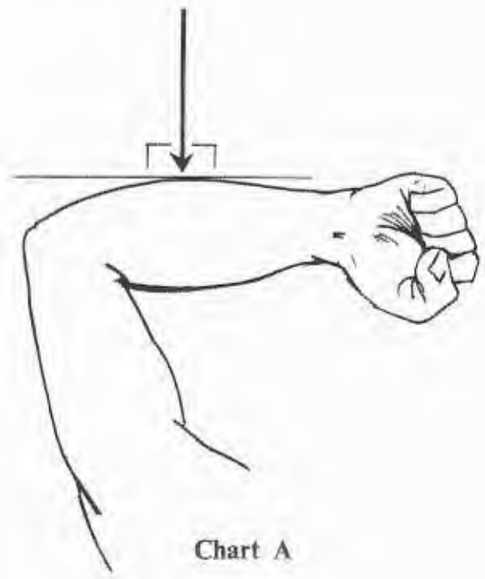


Chart A

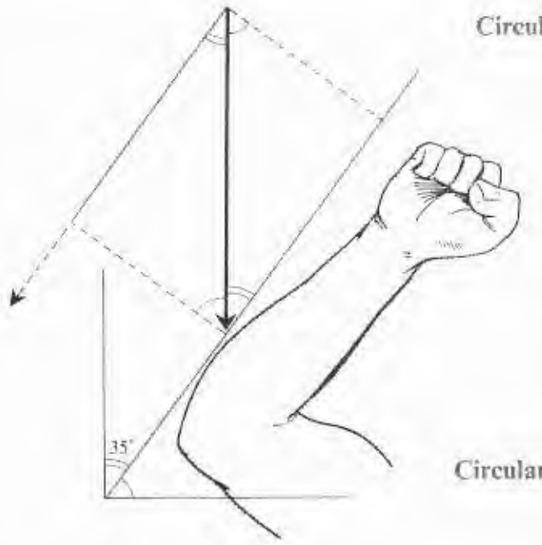


Chart B

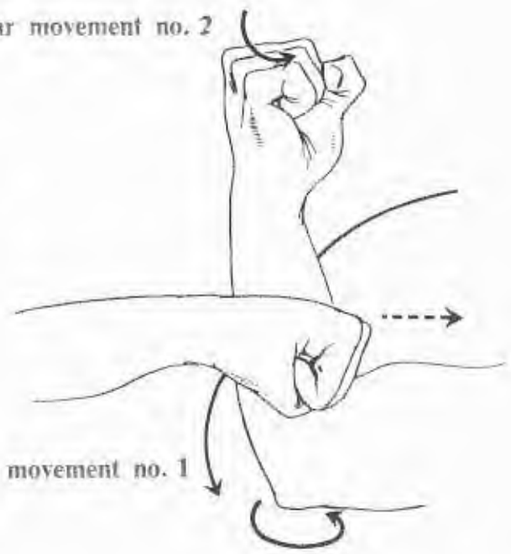


Chart C

upper block (*jodan-uke*)

We use the upper block against attacks to the face. We can use either the forefist or the knife hand; the main points and the forms are the same in both. Just as in the case of the thrust, it is vital to quickly and powerfully draw back the hand not used in the actual block so as to create a counter force that heightens the power and effect of the blocking hand.

It is extremely important to revolve the blocking arm.

middle outside block (*chudan-soto-uke*)

We use middle blocks against attacks to the body. We may block with either the forefist or with the knife hand. Whichever you use, put the hand of the blocking arm in front of your forehead, and using that position as a control point block in front of your own body by swinging your elbow outside inward in a semicircular movement.

middle inside block (*chudan-uchi-uke*)

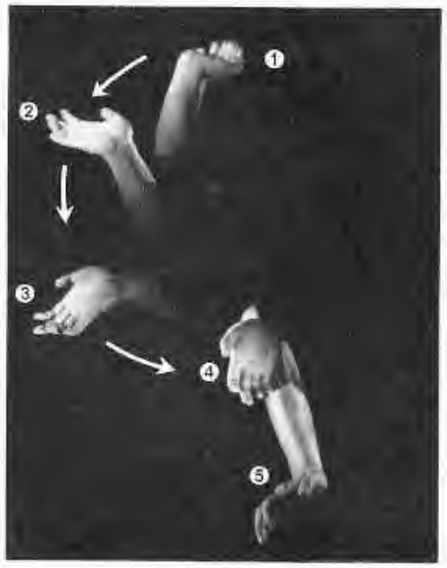
The form and the main features are the same as those for the preceding block, and once again we use either the forefist or the knife hand. Keeping the blocking arm on the inside, cross one arm over the other in front of you. Beginning at about the armpit of the withdrawn arm swing the blocking arm outward in a large circle. It is important to turn your arm using the elbow as your control fulcrum. Of course, when you block your opponent's attack, put a twist in your blocking arm for extra strength. Keep your withdrawn arm tightly tensed.

lower parry (*gedan-barai*)

We use this parry to fend off blows to the abdomen. The parrying arm swings downward from a position near the ear on the opposite side of the body. The twist in the parrying arm and the tensing of the withdrawn arm are the same as in all the other blocks.

palm-heel block (*shotei-uke*)

When your opponent attacks with a knife or some other weapon of that sort it is best to stay as far away from him as possible while you block his attack. This is the block we use in such instances. There are both upper and lower versions; the lower one is used to parry kicks from the opponent's feet.



cross block (*juji-uke*)

This block is used to stop your opponent's blow with both your hands and to restrict his movement. In this case, you shift into an attack with your feet.

You may use either the forefist or the knife hand. With the knife hand we frequently reverse handholds on the opponent's thrusting arm or grab the leg with which he attempts a kick. We cross our legs when we block to protect our groins.

thigh block (*kaji-uke*)

This block employs the outside of the thick part of the thigh in a movement from the inside out to parry your opponent's kicks. The outside thigh block (*soto kaji-uke*) uses the inside of the thick part of the thigh in a movement from the outside inward.

CHAPTER

6 stances and breathing

main points

For balance in all the karate techniques and for quick smooth movement and judgement in the free-style practice fights and in the stone-breaking techniques nothing is any more important than proper stances. In karate, where we use our entire body as a weapon, we must be prepared to handle that weapon with complete ease because we never know when or from what quarter an attack may come. We must always remain in balance and be ready to swiftly convert a block into an effective attack. This means that we must always use the most logical stance, the stance that is best suited to the technique, or to the opponent, at hand. We must always take into consideration the nature of the thrust or kick we are going to use and select a stance that suits it. The stances are also deeply connected with all of the forms. In fact, they make up the individual movements of each kind of form.

In general, the procedure used in instructing karate beginners is to first teach the proper fist grip and the way to use it and then while instructing in the stances to combine the lesson with thrusts and kicks. This process is an extremely important one because if at this early stage the beginner does not master the vital basics he will never have any hope of making progress.

Since, as we have already noted, swift bodily movements are vital to karate, one must always know where to put the center of gravity of his body. The upper half of your body in all stances should be perpendicular to the floor. You should relax all your muscles and keep your eyes always alert for the potential enemy. Though you relax all your other muscles, always keep your diaphragm tensed.

The stances we shall discuss in this chapter are essential basics without which the forms in Chapter Eight are impossible. Be sure you approach these stances with the attitude that you must master each of them.

forward leaning stance
(*zenkutsu-dachi*)

Put one foot out in front of the other so that the two are about the distance of the width of your hips apart; that is, they should be about eight inches farther apart than your normal stride. Point the toes of the forward foot straight ahead, bend that knee, lower your hips, and keep your body's center of gravity low. Point the toes of your rear foot slightly outward. All of the weight of your upper body should rest on your hips, and the straight line of your center of gravity should fall slightly forward of an imaginary spot in the dead middle of the distance between your legs. Since your weight does fall slightly to the front this stance is most effective in thrusts and front kicks in which your movement, too, is to the front.

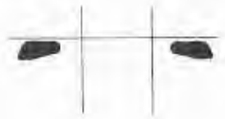
At the training hall, we always teach beginners the right-left low parry and the middle thrust first, and we always have them perform them from the forward leaning stance. This stance occurs in highly advanced thrusts, kicks, and blocks, in thrusts and kicks in the forms, and in the actual fight situations of free-style practice fights.

back leaning stance
(*kokutsu-dachi*)

Put one leg in front of the other just as you did in the forward leaning stance, but distribute your body weight so that about 70% of it falls on the rear leg and 30% of it on the forward leg. Lightly extend the forward knee, and lightly lift the heel of the forward foot from the floor. Bend the knee of your rear leg, and lower your hips. Arrange your feet so that the big toe of your forward foot is on a straight line with the heel of your rear foot. Keep your upper body's weight oriented on a vertical line that falls closer to your rear foot than to your forward one. Since most of your strength is directed to the rear in this stance, it is most effective in blocking an opponent's thrusts. We use this stance often in inner blocks and thrusts in all of the forms and also in practice fighting.

sumo stance (*shiko-dachi*)

Spread your feet apart to a distance of about twice your shoulders' width, and point the toes of both feet outward. Bend both knees, and lower your hips. The straight line of your body's center of gravity should fall at an imaginary spot exactly between your two feet. In this stance, because your center of gravity is low, your entire body is well balanced. From this stance, when you perform the basic thrust techniques you can keep your balance, and you can feel the strength flowing from your diaphragm into your fists. This particularly important stance for beginners occurs often in the forms in resistance movements against attacks from the side. Of course, because the balance it gives you helps you pack a lot more power, it is also useful in actual fighting situations. It is also particularly helpful in dealing the finishing blow after you have lept to your opponent's chest.



straddle stance (*kiba-dachi*)

Spread your legs as in the sumo stance, but point your toes straight ahead, and lower your hips as if you were on horseback. Here again, keep your body straight, and do not let it lean either forward or backward. Tense your diaphragm, and stretch your back straight so you can resist forces from the front or the back. Since in this stance too the body balance is very good, we use it in practicing the side and roundhouse kicks and in practicing the upper, middle, and lower thrusts. In the forms this stance is frequently the action used to shift from a block to a kick. Though, naturally, this stance occurs in actual fight situations often, it is actually more effective in dealing that last killing blow than it is when a good deal of movement is needed.

sanchin stance (*sanchin-dachi*)

Spread your feet about shoulders' width apart. Put the toes of your rear foot and the heel of your forward foot on a straight line running sideways your body. Point the toes of both feet about 45 degrees inward. Bend both knees inward slightly, and lightly lower your hips. Keep your upper body straight in such a way that your body's line of gravity falls at an imaginary spot right between your feet. In this stance your body is strongly balanced, and you are free to move in any direction to perform easily all of the kicks and thrusts. This is why this stance is the best suited to actual fight situations. When you have learned to perform all of the thrusts, kicks, and blocks in the stances we have already mentioned, turn to the *sanchin*, which will help you develop an extremely strong diaphragm.

cat stance (*nekoashi-dachi*)

From the rear leaning stance, turn the toes of your forward foot out slightly, and pull that foot in a little. Distribute your body weight 90% on the rear foot and 10% on the forward foot. Let only the toes of your forward foot touch the floor. This stance is used only in actual fights in which you will find it helpful in breaking your opponent's attack and in kicking to your opponent. Using the cat stance gives you great speed in shifting from one posture to another. Be very careful that you neither bend your rear knee too much nor lower your hips too much. Keep that leg bent only enough that you can always use it easily. Always keep your body weight on a straight line.

stable stance (*fudo-dachi*)

This is the stance most people assume without knowing it because it is comfortable. You stand in a natural posture with your feet spread about shoulder width and with your toes turned slightly out. Rarely used in actual fight situations, this stance serves in exchanging formal bows, as a beginning stance for forms, and as a stance in which to breathe when you go from one form to another.

normal stance (*heisoku-dachi*)

This stance, with toes pointed straight ahead and with both legs straight, is infrequently used in actual combat, but it is of importance in spiritual unification when we stand with one hand folded on the other at our abdomen and meditate or when we breathe between one form and another. It is a natural body position.

pigeon-toe stance (*uchihachiji-dachi*)

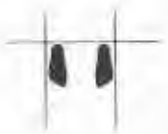
With your body in a natural posture and your feet spread about shoulder width, turn your toes in, and bend your knees slightly inward. This position permits quick agile movement and helps develop the muscles of the lower half of the body. It is extremely useful for beginners' practice. The body weight falls equally on both feet, and the upper body stays in a straight line.

open-toes stance (*musubi-dachi*)

This natural relaxed stance resembles the stable stance, except that in this case, we put our heels together. Though we do not often use this stance in actual fighting, it is the first and last step in many of the formal exercises. It is also the best stance to use when you stand in meditation to calm your spirit.

parallel stance (*heiko-dachi*)

This also is a natural stance, but one in which we stand with our feet about shoulder width apart and our toes pointed straight ahead. Once again, we use the parallel open stance more in formal exercises than in combat, but we must pay particular attention to stances of this sort because they keep the body in constant preparedness for attacks from any quarter. Always maintain one of these postures, and you will always be ready. Beginners should be extremely aware of the importance of these stances.



breathing

All martial arts have their particular breathing methods because proper breathing is vital both to the execution of techniques and to the acquisition of spiritual stability. In karate, where we must concentrate all of our spirit and strength at the very instant of execution of a technique, breathing at that instant can spell the success or failure of the technique. As we said in the chapter on training, one of the methods we use for this concentration is to forcefully exhale at the instant of contact. In this chapter we will be dealing with the most basic of the breathing methods used in daily training.

As you see in the chart, stand in the pigeon-toe stance, and quietly inhale through your nose. Relax all the muscles of your body, and breathe deeply as if you were to store all that breath in the very bottom of your abdomen. When you have breathed in as much as you can, open your mouth wide, and once again quietly, exhale through it. Inhalation and exhalation should require about thirty seconds each. When you think you have no more breath left, tense all the muscles of your body, particularly those of your abdomen, and squeeze out another breath, then, lightly biting your tongue, exhale one more time with all your might. This is a particularly fine breathing method because it both strengthens your diaphragm and smooths out irregularities in your breathing. Because spiritual stability is born of calm stable breathing, you cannot have one without the other.

Practically everyone has once or twice experienced the sensation of extreme fright that makes the heart beat fast and causes a person to forget to think calmly. In this condition one's nerves are excited and a nervous process involving the sympathetic and the semi-sympathetic nervous systems causes the breathing to become rough and irregular. Ordinarily, the sympathetic and the supplementary sympathetic nervous systems keep check on each other so that they stay in a state of equilibrium, but sudden fright or excitement gives the supplementary sympathetic system the ascendency and destroys the natural balance and disturbs our breathing. Since spiritual stability and calm breathing are intimately bound together, by controlling and stabilizing our breathing we are able to insure spiritual stability.

Since actual proof is always better than theory, try for yourself to see what proper breathe control can do. Anyone who has just run a long hard race is going to be out of breath. When this happens, repeat the breathing method we just explained three or four times, and you should get your wind back.

In daily training after each technique run through this breathing method. It will develop a powerful diaphragm, which, in turn, is the source of strength that gives you the great power you need at the peak point of each technique. Beginners should always remember that the diaphragm is a great source of power.

▲*ibuki*

1. Assume the pigeon-toe stance.
2. Bring both arms to your face, and cross them at about the wrist area. Take a deep breath.

3 – 5. Tense all of the muscles of your body, particularly the abdominal muscles. Open your mouth wide, and as you exhale make a rasping sound, and lower your arms to their original position.

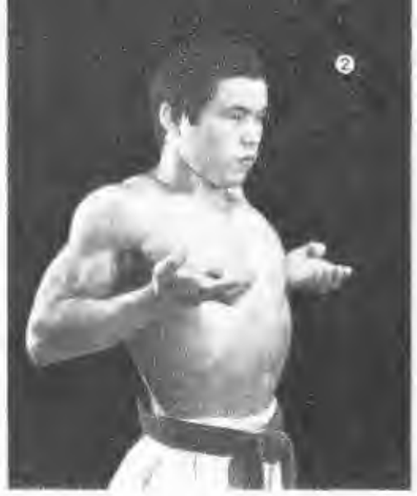
6. When you think you have completely exhaled, force out the last bit of air in your lungs with a gasp.

▼*nogare* I

1. Assume the pigeon-toe stance.

2 – 4. As you inhale quietly and deeply, stretch your arms, palms up, out in front of you, and slowly raise them till your hands are at your armpits.

5 – 6. As you quietly exhale invert your palms, and gently push them straight down.



nogare II

1. Assume the pigeon-toe stance.
2. As you inhale deeply, bring your hands, palms up, to your armpits.
3. Lower them to about your waist,and turn them so the palms face each other.
4. Tense your entire body, particularly your abdomen and your arms. Bend your hand till only the index and middle fingers are left straight out.
5. With your arms as tense as possible slowly thrust both arms straight out.
6 – 8. Open your hands palms up, and exhale quietly as you lower them to your hips. Turn your hands over and pull them in to your body.

nogare I and *nogare* II

We use the *nogare* breathing methods to keep our breath calm and unruffled in actual combat. Whereas *ibuki* is an active forceful system, *nogare* is calm and tranquilizing. It helps you wait in composure for your enemy's attack.

We classify *nogare* into two types: *nogare* I and *nogare* II. In *nogare* I, we breathe calmly and exhale quietly with the tips of our tongues between our teeth. You can get the idea of what we mean if you watch a lion or a tiger open his mouth silently and close it again as he breathes from his abdomen. The two types differ mainly in that in II you hold your breath for a while.

CHAPTER 7

daily training methods

main points

Karate training is more than just the putting on of the training clothes and the practicing of kicks and thrusts that people generally imagine it to be. Training should be a part of everything we do all the time. For instance, we can derive much valuable training from walking, climbing stairs, or lifting heavy objects. The problem is that all too many people, in their anxiety to be as comfortable as they can, fail to recognize the benefits ordinary exercises offer. By using the escalator or the elevator when they could walk they are actually depriving themselves of valuable movement. I myself know for a fact that climbing the steps is good not for just the legs and hips but for the whole body. When you have the time, always walk, always go up the stairs and down again on foot, and while you are doing it be aware that the acts you are performing are for your body's training and for the sake of your own life. If something heavy has to be lifted, lift it as if you were practicing with the barbells to build and strengthen your muscles at the training hall. When you ride the bus or the streetcar, get up for old folks and ladies, stand facing the front without holding onto anything, and use the motion of the vehicle to help you practice keeping your leg and hip balance. I believe that making a contribution to society, training one's body and spirit, and being a man who knows his aim in life is both the real karate way and a great human truth. I am sure that if even only one more person could think this way, the world would be a better place.

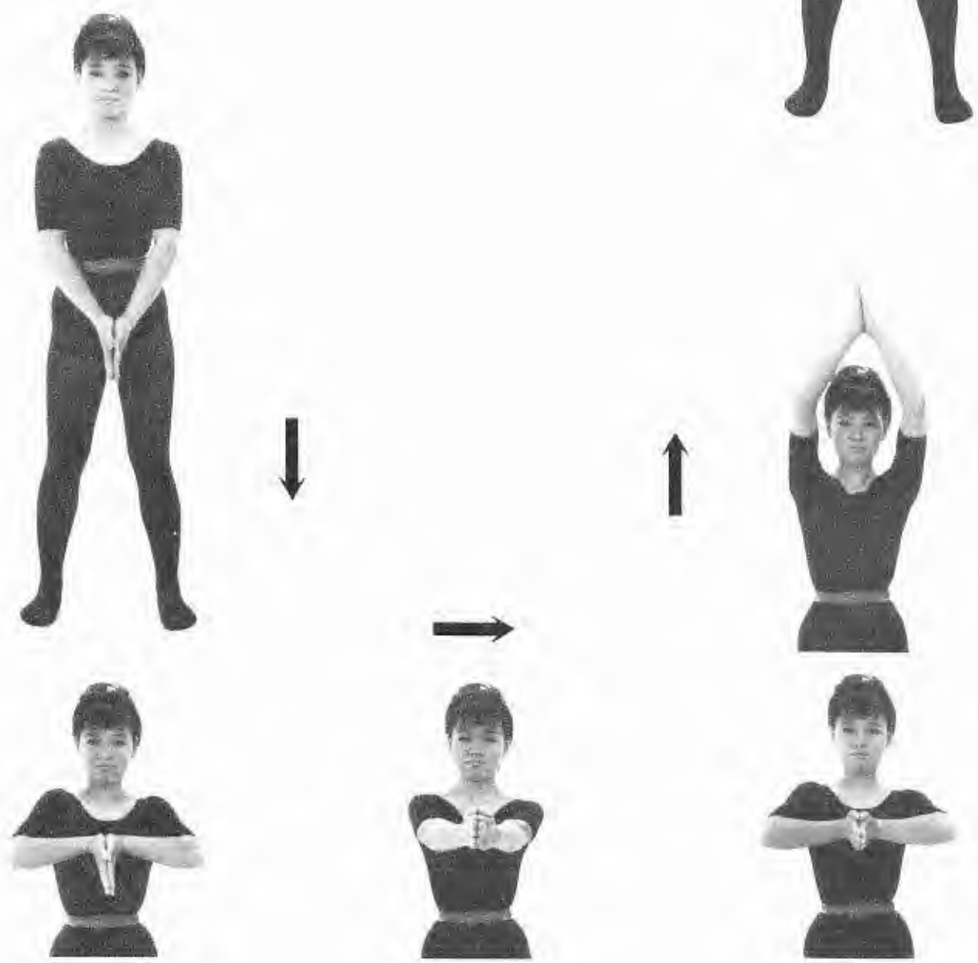
Before I go on to a detailed treatment of training-hall training, I want to emphasize the necessity for a man who wants to know the true karate way of making everything in his daily life an opportunity for karate training.

1. preparatory exercises

In all sports involving physical action preparatory and winding-up exercises are absolutely essential to limber up the body's major muscles and joints. For this reason you do not need any special beginning exercises for karate; any ordinary flexing exercises will be adequate. You must, however, be careful that you exercise all of your joints down to your finger tips because, in karate, strong joints help you develop springing power and a sense of speed.

wrist exercise

Put your palms firmly together, and point your fingers downward. Bring your joined hands to the level of your upper abdomen, turn your fingertips outward, and thrust to the front. Next return your hands to the upper abdomen area. Then turn your fingertips up, and thrust upward. Always keep your palms firmly together. This exercise is also effective for the elbow joints.



stomach exercise

Sit with the soles of your feet together, and bend over till your head touches your feet.

ankle exercise

Open your legs wide. Stretch one leg out straight, and bend the other at the knee. Put your weight on the bent leg. First put all of the foot of the outstretched leg flat on the floor. Next put only the inside of that foot on the floor, and turn the sole outward. Now put only the heel of the foot on the floor, and point your toes upward.

crotch stretch

If you cannot spread your legs apart fairly far your kicks will not be as effective as they should. Practice spreading your legs when you have just taken a bath and your muscles are soft. A good exercise is to sit with your legs spread wide and bend over and touch first one toe, then the other.

finger joints exercise

Join the five fingertips of one hand with those of the other hand; tense your fingertips, and push. Be sure your palms and the fleshy parts of your fingers do not meet.

The easiest and most effective grip exercise is to stretch both arms straight out in front of you and rapidly clench and open both fists. When you clench your fist make a tight proper forefist, and when you open them stretch your fingers out as far as possible. Do four or five sets of 100 of these daily. Handstands are also good to develop the fingertips, particularly if you get to the point where you can stand on only three or two fingers of each hand.

2. thrusts and kicks training methods

a. forefist

We use thrusts in the upper, middle, and lower thrusts, in chin strikes, and in roundhouse strikes. Training methods for thrusts fall roughly into the following four types, each of which has its particular advantages. When you practice use all four methods over and over again. The dry-run thrust requires little space, and since you can do it alone you should practice it very often.

dry-run thrust training

Imagine an opponent right in front of you, and thrust at him with all your might. Since you expand your arm muscles to the full without contracting them in this exercise, it is most helpful in developing your sense of speed. Use the *sanchin* stance.

It is important in this exercise to avoid tensing your body and to keep your shoulders, in particular, relaxed. Keep your hips stable, and feel as if the strength of your body is rising from your abdomen to your deltoids. At the moment of imaginary contact, pour all your strength into your forefist and strike as if to destroy. Keep in mind that the main purpose of this thrust practice is to develop speed sense, and repeat your thrusts, one after the other, as fast as you can. It is easy to correct mistakes in your form immediately and to avoid bad habits if you practice in front of a mirror.

It is of vital importance that you learn to place the contact spot on a line leading straight out from your body for either your right or your left arm. This spot remains constant in all the thrusts. If, as you thrust, your arms are too far apart, your opponent can easily leap in between them. If they are too close together, he can easily get a reverse hand hold on you. Practice this thrust often enough so that you can place your thrusts accurately, even with your eyes shut. Always try to see things with your opponent's eyes and to put yourself in his shoes.

For form, see Chapter Three, Correct Thrust Form.

padded board training

Training by thrusting into a padded board is one of the best ways to develop grip strength and power in your arms, wrists, and hips.

Assume the forward leaning stance. If you are thrusting with your right hand, your left leg is forward. If you are striking with your left hand, your right leg is forward. Thrust to the board with the forefist twenty times with one arm and then forty times with the other. Follow each thrust with one hand with a lower parry with the other.

When you assume the forward leaning stance, your entire body should be at ease. At the instant before the thrust, tense your abdomen, and feel the strength flow upward from there to your deltoid, your shoulder, your arm, and then to your fist. Make sure the contact spot is accurately placed, and at the moment of contact give a twist to your hips that will add the extra counter force that enables you to concentrate the power of your entire body in the fist of the striking hand. At that time, exhale sharply. Do not forget, also, to add a twist to your fist at the instant of contact.

At contact, check instantly to see if the thrust made contact accurately, return your hips to their original position, bring your striking hand back to about the height of the nipple of your chest, and inhale. Perform this as fast as possible.

The beginner will not be ready for the method of adding power to the thrust by raising the heel of the withdrawn foot from the floor. For this reason, thrust with both feet firmly on the floor, and inhale as your draw your hand back.

Be very careful about the distance between you and the padded board. If you are too far away from it, you will have to stretch, and your strength will not flow into your fist. If you are too close to it, you will be unable to stretch your arm out to the full, power will be left in your arm, and it will flow back to shock your own shoulder. You will cause both your fist and your shoulder pain if the padded board is too firm. Have it made to suit your body.

sandbag training

Sandbags are good for training a sense of speed and timing at the instant of contact. The striking method and the strength distribution for sandbag training are the same as those for straw-sheaf training. Stand with the toes of both feet parallel, relax your body, and jumping lightly back and forward, aim short punches to the sandbag. Short punches are useful for close-quarters fighting such as that used when you have leapt close into your opponent's chest. Though the strikes are delivered from very short range, they pack terrific power. This training method is good practice for instantaneous concentration of the power of your entire body. Sandbag practice is particularly fine for the forefist lower thrust.

punching-ball training

Though punching-ball training and sandbag training produce about the same effects, because when you strike a punching ball you have to move very fast, sparring with it is good training for a fast eye. Stand with your toes parallel, and lightly moving around forward, backward, right, and left, strike the ball. Punching-ball training is better for speed than strength.

b. inverted fist

We use the inverted fist in forward strikes, right-left strikes, strikes to the spleen, and lower thrusts. Although the strike destinations for both the inverted fist and the forefist are about the same, since the striking method is different, so is the training method.

dry-run thrust training

Using either the parallel stance, the straddle stance, or the sumo stance, thrust exactly as you do with the forefist. The effects, too, are almost exactly the same. The most important thing to remember in the inverted-fist thrust is to return the fist to your body the instant after contact. This is good training in fast recovery of your hand. If you are practicing the forward strike, use either the *sanchin* or the cat-foot stance.

Always twist your wrist to the outside at the moment of contact. Be sure to check Chapter Three.

padded-board training

Turn so that you are sideways to the padded board, and assume either a parallel, a straddle, or a sumo stance. The distance in this case is about the same as it was in the case of the forefist training.

To strengthen your grip and speed up the twist in your wrist, leave your forearm as it is, and strike with the wrist as fast as you can. Repeat fifty times with each hand. Though the training and its effect are about the same with the sandbag or with the straw sheaf, since the impact of the strike is different, you can train your muscles more effectively if you use both methods rather than only one.

When you use a punching ball, the target is small, and you must move about rapidly. For this reason strike with the whole of the back of your fist.

o. knife hand

Knife-hand strikes fall into two main categories: those in which the strike descends from above (knife-hand collarbone strike, knife-hand strike to the spleen) and those in which the strike moves outward on a straight forward line (knife-hand strike to the face, driving knife-hand strike to the collarbone).

dry-run strike training

As in the cases of the other practice techniques, the aim in this one is to develop a sense of speed. Be careful when you strike at your imaginary mark not to let your hand keep going but to stop the knife hand at a point where contact would be made if you had an actual opponent. Repeat the strike over and over, first with the right and then with the left hand. Do not tense your body, but feel the entire process of your strength's flowing smoothly from your abdomen, to your deltoids, your shoulder, and your arm. You should repeat the strike 30 to 40 times with each hand. Check Chapter Three.

padded-board training

Of the three stances we use in this practice, the parallel, the sumo, and the straddle stance, the first is the easiest. When you are practicing strikes that descend from above, use a suspended straw sheaf. For horizontal strikes stand to the side of the sheaf, and strike 30 times with one hand and 50 with the other. Strength distribution, breathing, and body balance are the same as they are in the forefist exercises.

sandbag training

Key points and effects of the technique are the same as those in forefist practice. In general, except for the knife-hand driving strike to the collarbone, knife hand strikes are used in large motions against large targets rather than in powerful short punches like those in the forefist techniques. For this reason, strength is important. When you practice these strikes with the sandbag, hit as if you were about to bury your hand into the bag at the moment of contact. Also remember that the entire motion must be as fast as possible.

d. fist edge

Used largely in downward strikes, the fist edge is extremely powerful and most useful in dealing the final blow to your opponent. Though, naturally, speed is important to the technique, since its effect depends on strength, developing that strength is the principal practice point. Practice this technique together with the knife hand since the main elements of the two are the same.

straw-sheaf training

The sheaf should be at a height to come to about your lower abdomen. Strike a downward blow, beginning behind your ear, with all your might. As your hand descends add the all-important counter force by giving your upper body a good twist.

e. elbow

The power of the elbow is most clearly evident in close-quarter fighting when you have lept into your opponent's chest. Because the twist in the hips, the turning of the upper body, and the flexibility of both hips and upper body are most important factors in elbow roundhouse strikes or rising strikes, we must practice with the idea of completely mastering the timing involved in these movements.

dry-run strike training

In upper and middle elbow strikes, keep your fist fixed firmly and immovably on your chest, bend your elbow completely, and with a good twist in your hips, swing your elbow with all your might from the outside inward. The round swing in the elbow and the twist in the hips must be the same. Do not tense your shoulders until the moment of contact, because tensing them earlier slows down your motion. For stability in the lower half of the body we use the forward leaning stance. We practice this inside strike together with the outside strike that swings from the inside outward.

In the rising elbow strike use the same stance, and keeping your elbow well bent and adding the twist to your hips, raise your elbow straight up till your fist comes to your shoulder. Practice the rising elbow strike together with the descending elbow strike.

This thrust practice is particularly useful as it contains exercises for the main muscles of the upper body, the movement of the hips, and the flexibility of the knees, all of which are important to all karate techniques.

straw-sheaf training

Assuming the same forward leaning stance used in the forefist practice, aim a reverse elbow strike to the straw sheaf. When you practice the outside elbow strike, stand parallel to and to the side of the sheaf. You must use a suspended sheaf to practice the descending elbow strike.

sandbag training

The nerves in the elbow are very sensitive and will not take sudden violent contact with hard objects. For this reason it is better to practice with something like a sandbag that is not too hard. Always take great care that you strike accurately to your mark.

f. spear hand

Strong knuckles are the most important thing in the spear hand. If they are weak you will injure your hand when you thrust. Because strength in the knuckles is important to the grip and to all the techniques as well as to the spear hand, practicing spear-hand thrusts is essential.

thrusting into beans

As we have already noted, in the spear hand do not stretch your fingers out completely, keep all four fingers tight together, and keep the thumb close in to the rest of the hand.

Good practice for beginners is to thrust your spear hand into a box filled with fine-grained sand. Since gatherings of nerve ends occur in the fingertips, at first your hands will hurt from this thrust practice, but if you do not overdo it and practice daily you will get used to it. After two or three months you can gradually increase the size and hardness of your practice material till you can use soy beans or fairly fine gravel. This is also a good way to practice the chicken-beak hand.

g. kicking methods

We divide kicks into the following major categories according to the striking area:

a. Kicks using the ball of the foot
b. Kicks using the instep
c. Kicks using the heel
d. Kicks using the knife foot
e. Kicks using the knee

Though all of them have their own special strengths, they share the necessity of kicking rapidly and of recovering your leg rapidly. As this requires a good spring movement in the hips and since without stability in the hips the kick becomes inaccurate and speed is lost, it is essential to exercise in any number of ways to build up springy hips. Running, jumping rope, knee bends, and hand-stands are very good. In addition, since kicks demand that you be able to spread your legs wide, be sure that in your preparatory exercises you stress this.

dry-run kick

In all the kicks, keep your eye on the target, and be sure you use the correct part of the foot as the striking area. Also always recover your leg accurately. The effect of kick practice, as is also the case with thrust practice, is to instill speed in the body. This kick practice is indispensable to the development of that all-important speed and to the development of important muscles in the legs.

When you practice, kick each time as if you wanted to make that kick really count. Alternate legs, one at a time, and repeat the kicks 40 times with each when you are kicking forward and 20 times each when you are kicking to the side. Use the parallel or the forward leaning stance, and check Chapter Four.

padded-board training

Use the padded board to practice the front kick, the roundhouse kick, the rising kick, with the ball of the foot, the knife foot, or the ankle. If your form is bad and you do not always kick carefully, the effect will be lost. Use either the cat-foot stance, the parallel stance, or the forward leaning stance.

For the groin kick with the instep or the back kick with the heel use a suspended straw sheaf. Always practice with careful aim to your target in these kicks because they demand accuracy. It is important to keep your eye in good training because you will also have to kick to moving targets. The parallel stance is suitable in this case.

sandbag training

Sandbags are fine for practicing any of the kicks because the target is large, it is not too hard, and it moves a good bit. When you practice alone, just kicking the bag is all right, but it is also a good idea, if you have a partner, to practice kicking the bag in turns. Once again, the distance you stand from the sandbag is very important. First measure the interval with your feet, then establish the proper distance for yourself. If you stand too close, the force of the kick will recoil on your own leg and knock you off balance. If you are too far away, however, you will totter when you kick. Use a parallel or a forward leaning stance.

punching-mit training

Training with a moving target is best for developing fast accurate kicks. This particular exercise is intended less to give strength than to help you develop quick movements to the right and left and forward and backward.

PART

2

FORMAL EXERCISES

8. formal exercises

9. basic formal practice fighting

CHAPTER

8 formal exercises

We might call the individual thrusts, blocks, and kicks we have been discussing the alphabet of karate, that is, the individual parts from which karate is made. Karate formal exercises, by combining all these isolated elements and giving them concrete forms, are the spelling that makes words and sentences of the karate alphabet.

As we have already remarked, proper-form karate helps develop amazing speed and an ability to instantaneously shift the center of gravity of your body's weight. In other words, in karate we must be able to shift our weight from one foot to another and perform some given technique while maintaining complete front-back, top-bottom, and right-left balance. Furthermore, to be able to concentrate an explosion of all of our body's force in the leg or foot that in a kick or a thrust comes in contact with the opponent and to do so at the split-second of contact requires perfect timing. We can see then that we can manifest really tremendous power in karate only when we are able to use a complete fusion of form, speed, balance, strength, and timing. All of these five vital elements are linked, and each is essential because form is born of balance, and the speed and timing that come from balance build strength.

The karate forms give logical organization to these five important elements and rhythmically combine all the techniques for what we might call karate's grammar. In associated movements sometimes a given thrust, kick, or block will serve the function of an adjective or an adverb, whereas in other cases it could serve as the subject, the object, or the complement in our karate sentence. To continue the parallel to its conclusion we can call the stances the conjunctions in our karate rules of composition.

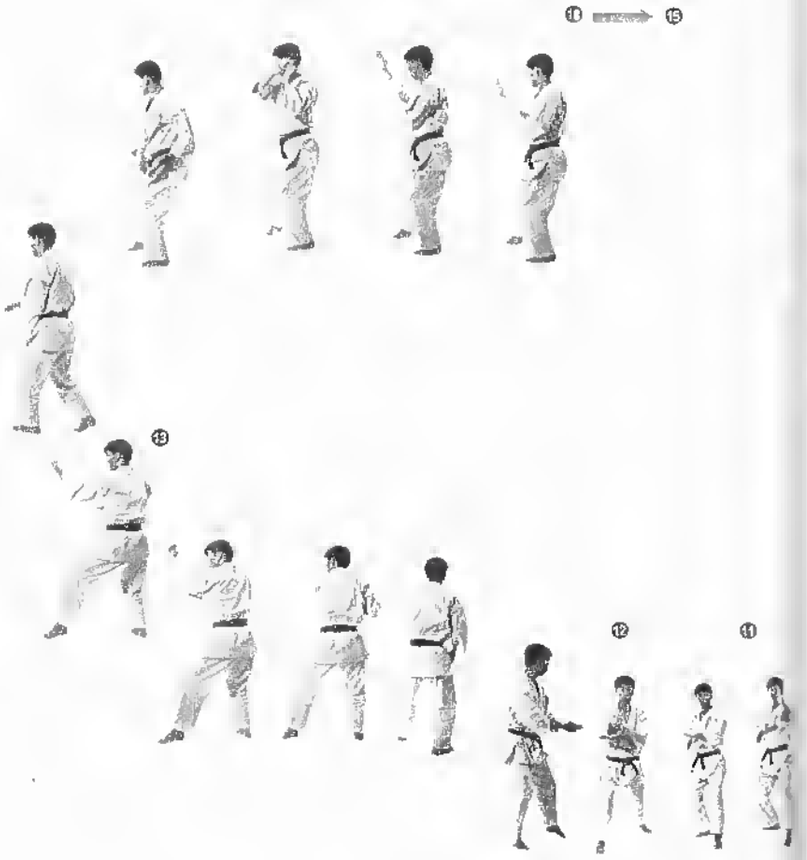
Just as incorrect grammar makes it impossible to express ideas, so karate formal exercises that break the karate rules are useless, even though they might look good. Because the kind of control that is essential to the more sophisticated actual combat situations includes the five elements we have been talking about, be sure you are determined to master them all.

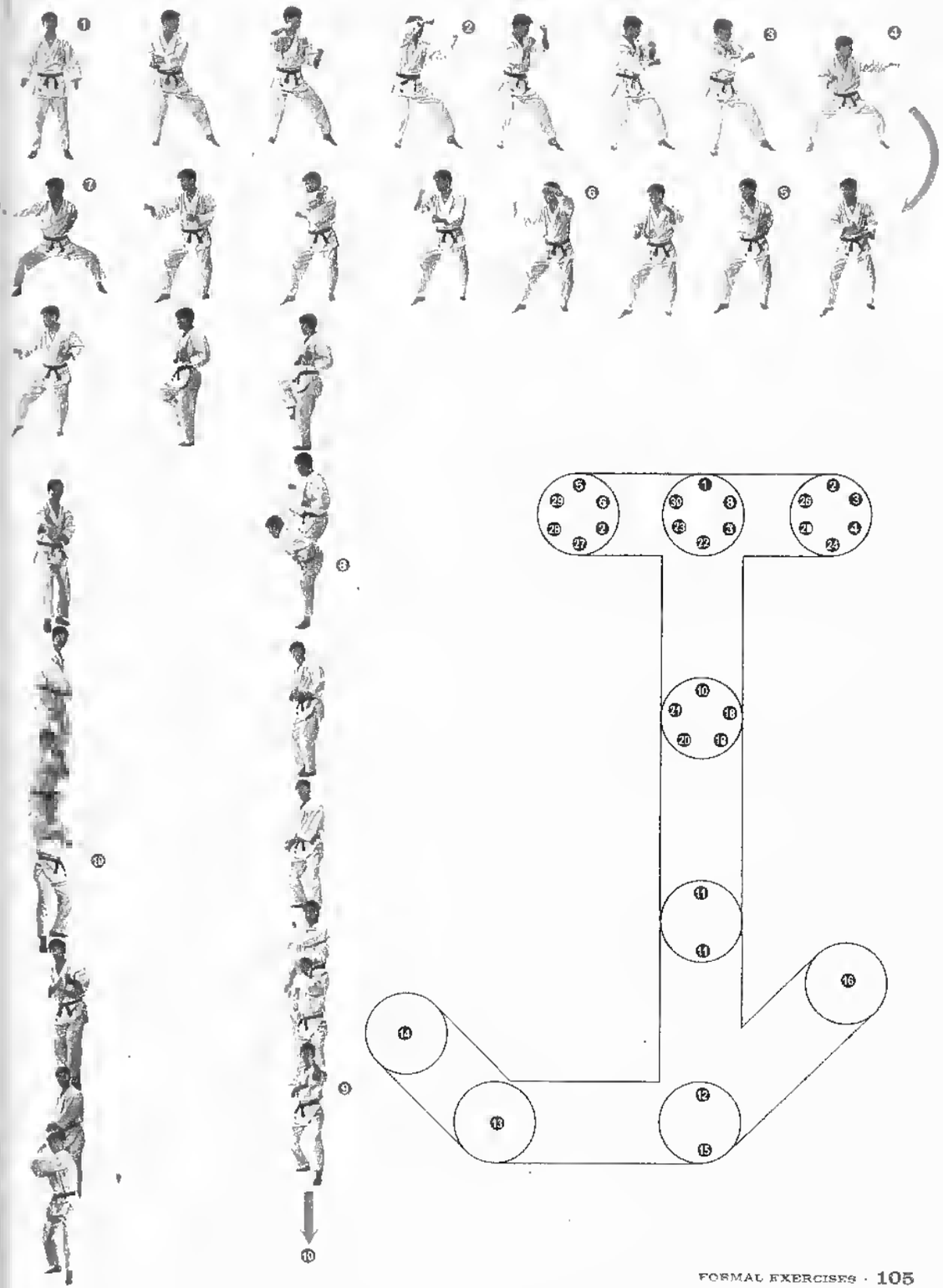
When you begin learning the formal exercises, be careful not to hurry too much. Set out with the idea of learning the full meaning of each movement, and do not, as beginners often tend to do, aim for only a surface expression of the appearance of the formal exercise. Though at first you certainly must not be in a rush, once you have mastered any certain movement, try to build up as much speed in it as possible, because remaining too long in any single posture gives your opponent a good attack opportunity.

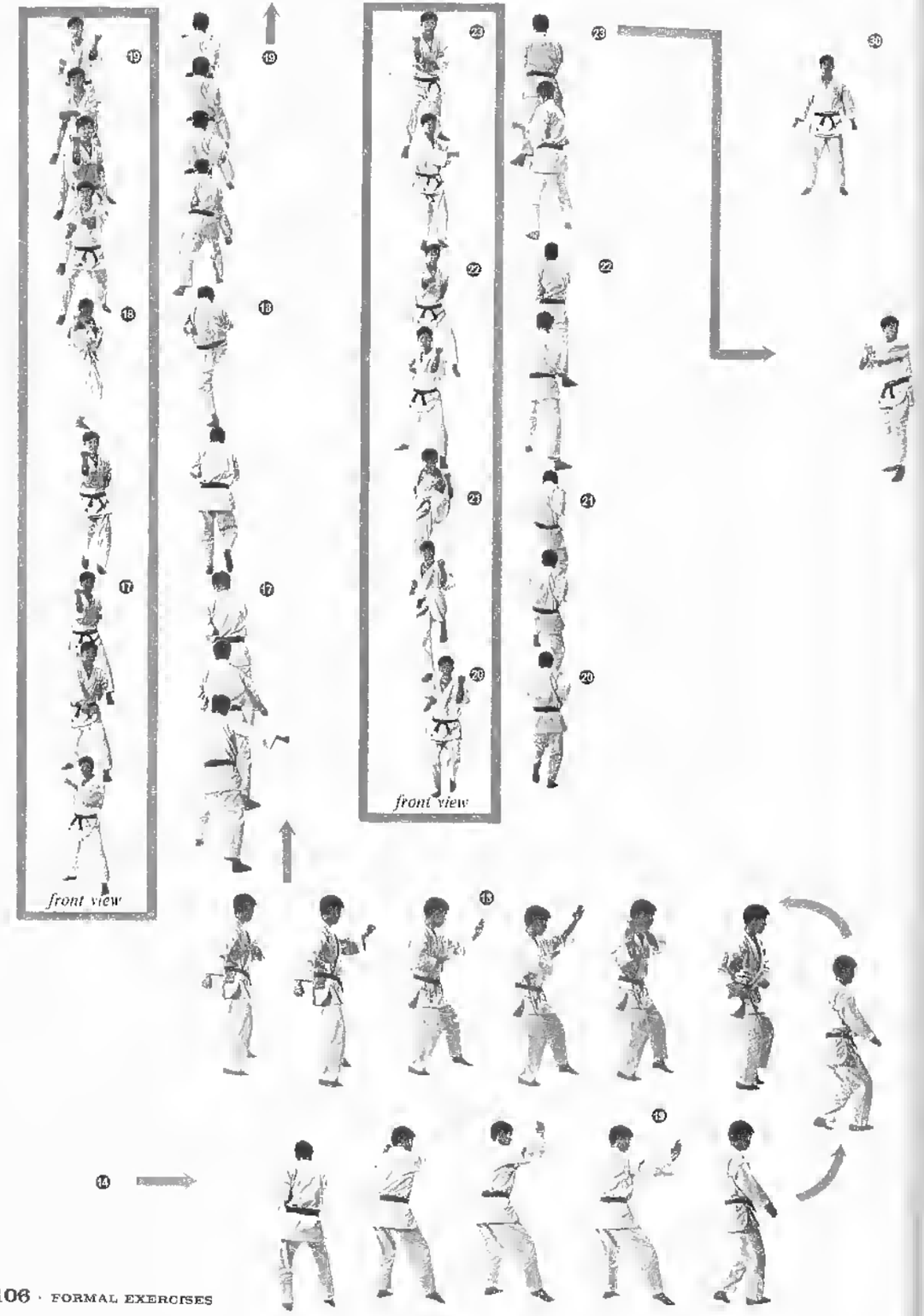
We present in this book the absolute minimum formal exercises that a beginner needs for the early karate classes. Since we included the *taikyoku* I and the *pinan* I in *This Is Karate*, we omit them here.

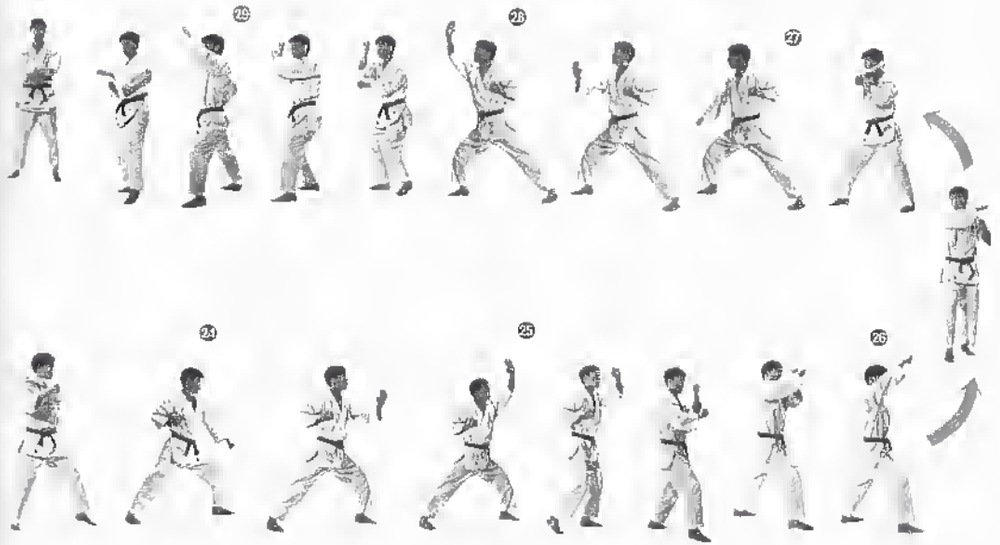
pinan II

■1. Assume the stable stance. Tense your abdomen.
■2. Rotate your body 90 degrees to the left, taking a half step forward on your left foot to put yourself in the left forward leaning stance. Bring your left fist edge over on top of your right wrist. Simultaneously, execute a left middle inside block and a right upper block.
■3. Immediately execute a downward right fist-edge strike.
■4. Take a further half step to the left on your left leg till you are in the straddle stance. Pull your right fist in to your right side, and deliver a left middle forefist thrust to the left side.
■5. Pull your right foot a half step in for a right backward leaning stance, put your right fist edge on top of your withdrawn left wrist.
■6. Execute a right middle inside block and a left upper block simultaneously.
■7. Immediately bring your left fist down in a left downward fist-edge strike. Take a quick step forward on your right foot, and execute a right middle forefist thrust to the right side.
■8. Bring your right foot to your left knee, and simultaneously execute a right side kick and a right inverted-fist strike to the side. Bring your right foot down beside your left foot.
■9. Take a half step forward on your left foot for the left forward leaning stance. As you cover your abdomen with your left knife hand, execute a right inside knife-hand block.
■10. Taking a half step forward on your right foot, execute a right knife-hand inside block.
■11. Repeat step 9.
■12. Taking a further half step forward on your right foot, execute a right spear-hand thrust to the front. Put your open left hand, palm down, under your right elbow.
■13. Pivoting on your right foot, bring your left foot 270 degrees to the rear. This puts you in a backward leaning stance. As you turn, cover your abdomen with your right knife hand, and execute a left inside knife-hand block.
■14. Repeat step 10.

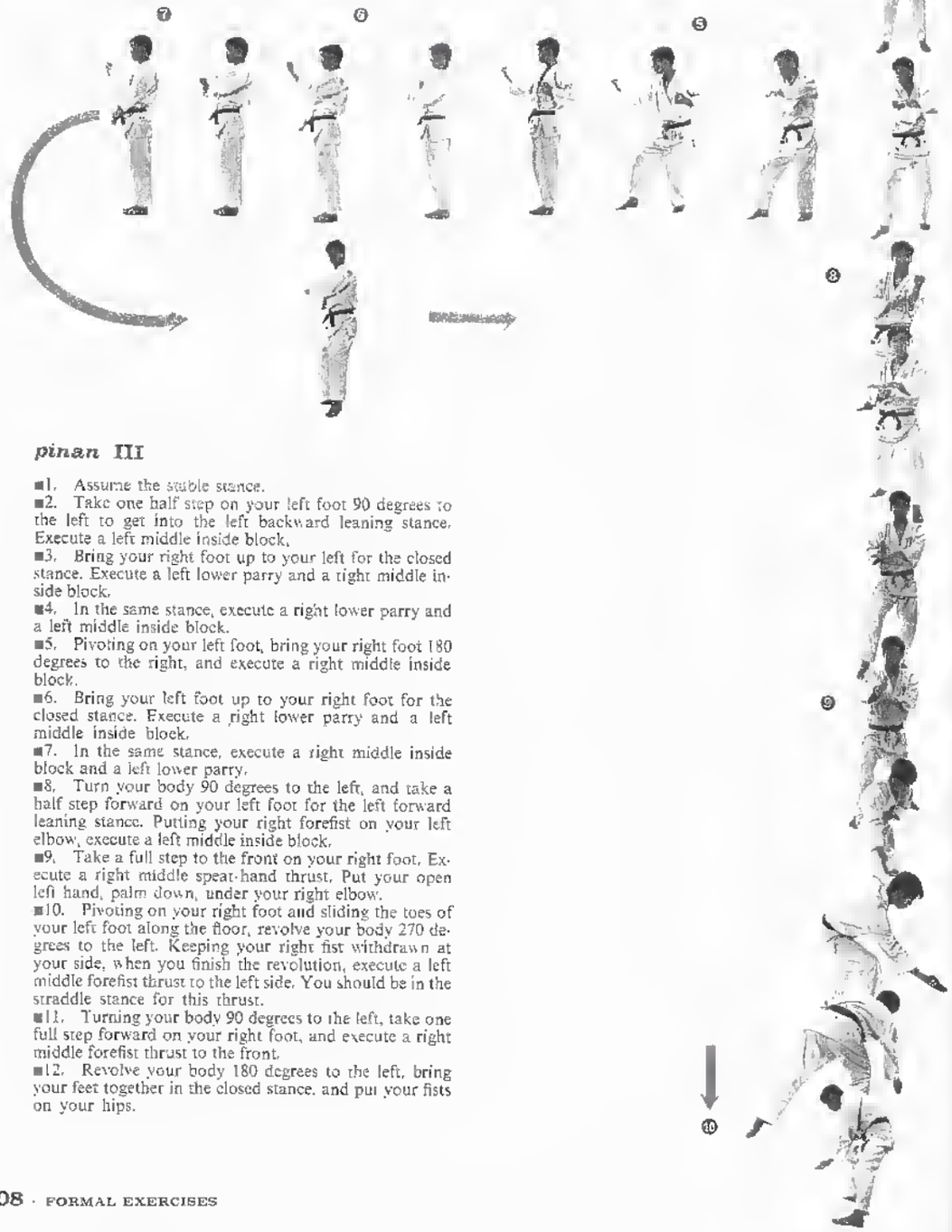






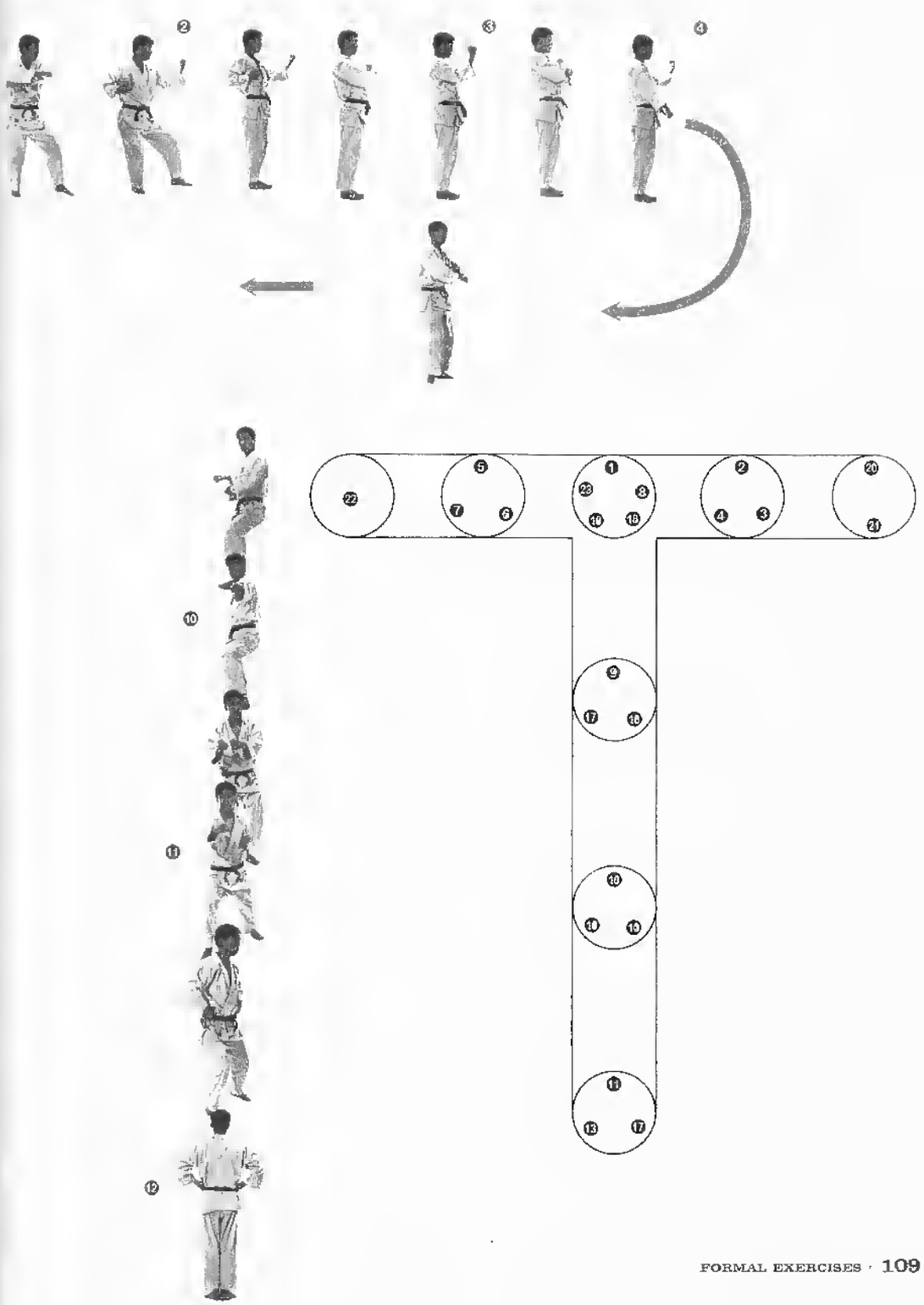


■15. Repeat step 10.
■16. Repeat step 13 as it is.
■17. Pivoting on your right foot and taking a step forward on your left foot 45 degrees to the left, assume the forward leaning stance. Swing your right fist to the rear and to the front in a wide circle, then execute a middle inside block.
■18. Execute a right front kick.
■19. Bring your right foot down in front of you, and assume the forward leaning stance. Execute a left middle forefist thrust.
■20. Immediately execute a left inside middle block.
■21. Execute a left front kick.
■22. Bring your left foot down in front to put yourself in the left forward leaning stance. Execute a right middle forefist thrust.
■23. Bring your right foot far enough in front to put yourself in the right forward leaning stance, and execute a right middle inside block. Keep your left fist on your right elbow.
■24. Pivoting on your right foot, bring your left foot 90 degrees to the rear to get into the left forward leaning stance. Execute a left lower parry, and pull your right fist in to your right side.
■25. In the same position, execute an upper left knife-hand thrust.
■26. Pivoting on your left foot, take a step 45 degrees to the front on your right foot for the right forward leaning stance. At the same time, execute a right upper block.
■27. Pivoting on your left foot, turn 135 degrees to the right. Assume the right forward leaning stance. Execute a right lower parry.
■28. In the same position, execute a right upper knife-hand thrust.
■29. Pivoting on your right foot, extend your left foot 45 degrees to the front for the right forward leaning stance. Execute a left upper knife-hand block.
■30. Crossing your hands in front of you, bring them down, and slide your feet back into the stable position.



pinan III

■1. Assume the stable stance.
■2. Take one half step on your left foot 90 degrees to the left to get into the left backward leaning stance. Execute a left middle inside block.
■3. Bring your right foot up to your left for the closed stance. Execute a left lower parry and a right middle inside block.
■4. In the same stance, execute a right lower parry and a left middle inside block.
■5. Pivoting on your left foot, bring your right foot 180 degrees to the right, and execute a right middle inside block.
■6. Bring your left foot up to your right foot for the closed stance. Execute a right lower parry and a left middle inside block.
■7. In the same stance, execute a right middle inside block and a left lower parry.
■8. Turn your body 90 degrees to the left, and take a half step forward on your left foot for the left forward leaning stance. Putting your right forefist on your left elbow, execute a left middle inside block.
■9. Take a full step to the front on your right foot. Execute a right middle spear-hand thrust. Put your open left hand, palm down, under your right elbow.
■10. Pivoting on your right foot and sliding the toes of your left foot along the floor, revolve your body 270 degrees to the left. Keeping your right fist withdrawn at your side, when you finish the revolution, execute a left middle forefist thrust to the left side. You should be in the straddle stance for this thrust.
■11. Turning your body 90 degrees to the left, take one full step forward on your right foot, and execute a right middle forefist thrust to the front.
■12. Revolve your body 180 degrees to the left, bring your feet together in the closed stance, and put your fists on your hips.



■13. Execute a right front kick.
■14. Turning your body 90 degrees to the left, as you bring your foot down from the kick, keep your hands on your hips, and execute a right elbow strike.
■15. Staying in the same posture, deliver a right inverted-fist strike to your imaginary opponent's face.
■16. Turn your body 90 degrees to the right, and sliding your left foot by your right foot, execute a left front kick. As you turn, return your right fist to its former position on your right hip. As you bring your foot down from the kick, turn your body 90 degrees to the right. Leaving your hands on your hips, execute a left downward strike with the left elbow. Follow this with a left inverted-fist strike to your imaginary opponent's face.
■17. Turning your body 90 degrees to the left, execute a right front kick.
■18. Repeat steps 14 and 15.
■19. Bring your left foot one step in front of your right foot as you turn your body 90 degrees to the right. Execute a left middle forefist thrust.
■20. Slide your right foot in to your left and then one step right to assume the straddle stance.
■21. In the same stance, aim a left elbow strike straight behind you, and as you strike over your left shoulder with a right forefist, pivot on your right foot, and revolve your body 180 degrees to the left.
■22. Keeping your hands in the same position, leap to the right on both feet. At the instant you land, execute a left elbow strike.
■23. Bring your right foot in toward your left foot till you are in the stable stance. Cross your arms in front of you, and bring them to your sides.

pinan IV

■1. Assume the stable stance. Tense your abdomen, and look straight ahead. At the preparations call, bring both arms up, cross them at about navel height, and bring them back again to the preparations position. Take a step forward 90 degrees to the left on your left foot at the call "begin." This brings you to a left backward leaning stance. Bringing your left hand up from your right hip line, execute a left knife-hand middle block, as you cover your face with your right palm heel.

■2. Shift your weight from your right foot to your left foot, and execute a right middle knife-hand strike, as you protect your face with your left palm heel.

■3. Pivoting on your right foot, swing your left foot wide to the front to get into the left forward leaning stance. Execute a lower crossed-arms block without rounding your back.

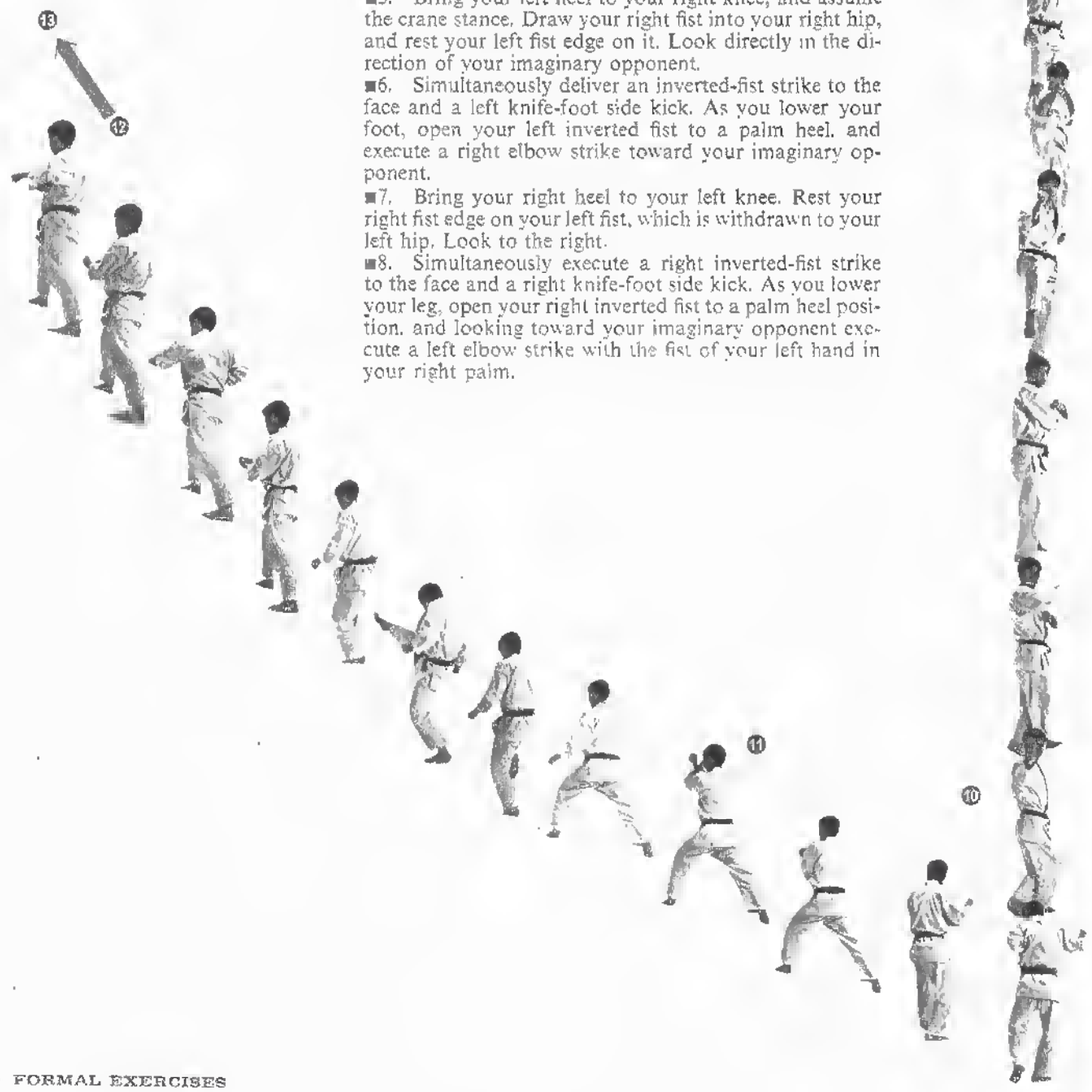
■4. Pivoting on your left foot, swing your right foot wide to the front to get into the right forward leaning stance. Bring your left fist to your right elbow, and execute a right middle inside block.

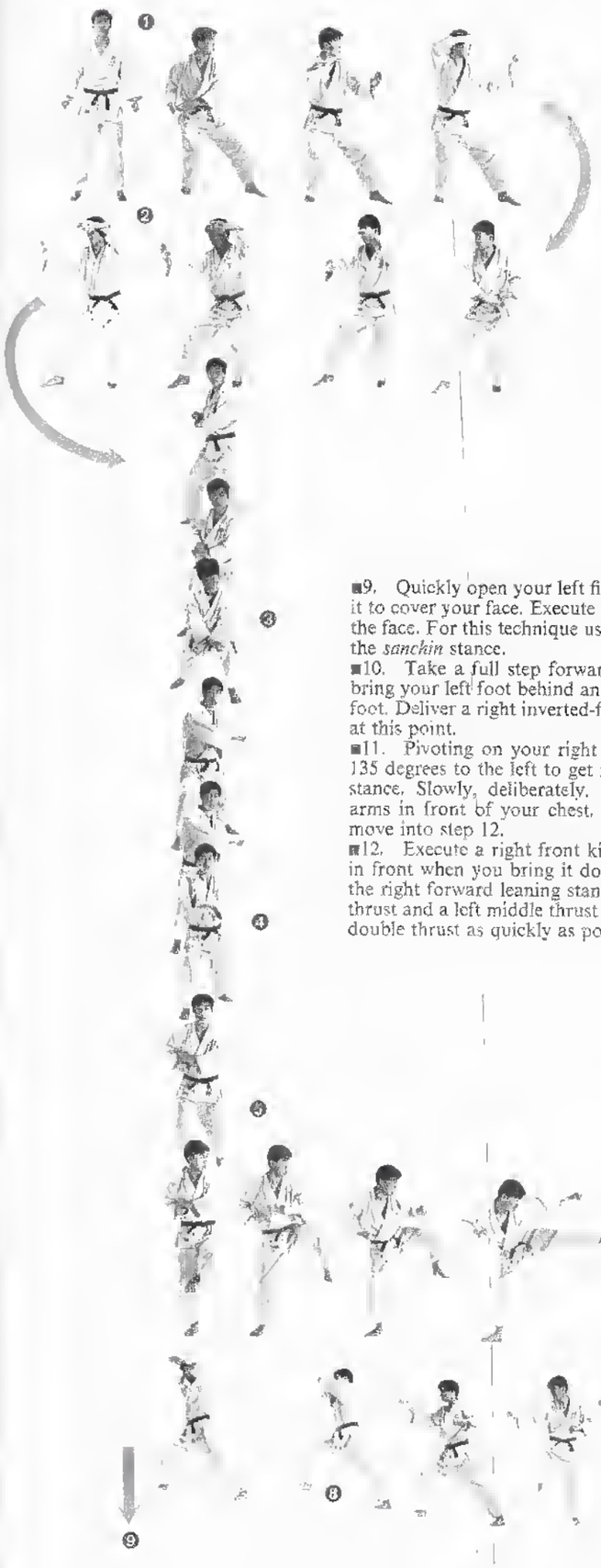
■5. Bring your left heel to your right knee, and assume the crane stance. Draw your right fist into your right hip, and rest your left fist edge on it. Look directly in the direction of your imaginary opponent.

■6. Simultaneously deliver an inverted-fist strike to the face and a left knife-foot side kick. As you lower your foot, open your left inverted fist to a palm heel, and execute a right elbow strike toward your imaginary opponent.

■7. Bring your right heel to your left knee. Rest your right fist edge on your left fist, which is withdrawn to your left hip. Look to the right.

■8. Simultaneously execute a right inverted-fist strike to the face and a right knife-foot side kick. As you lower your leg, open your right inverted fist to a palm heel position, and looking toward your imaginary opponent execute a left elbow strike with the fist of your left hand in your right palm.



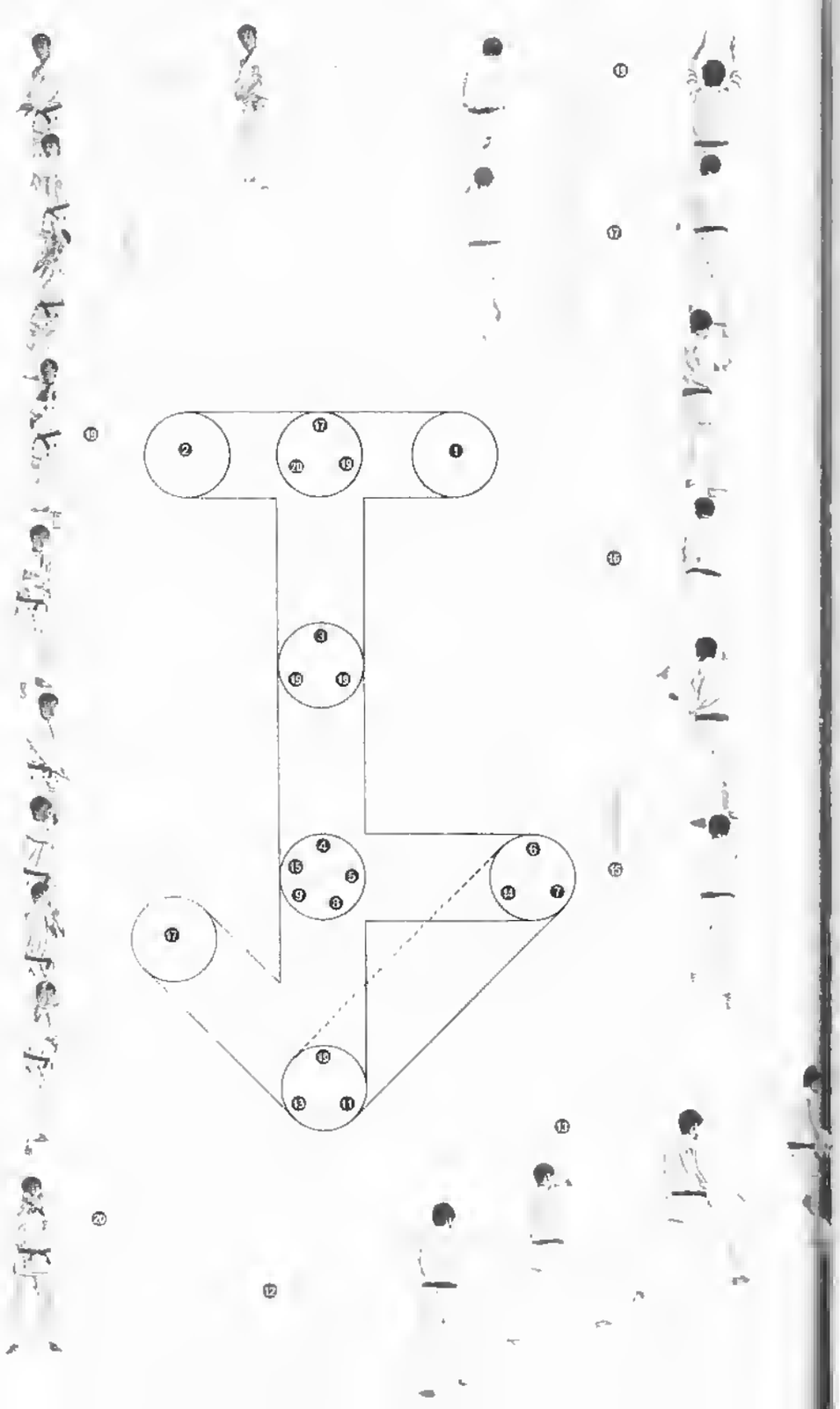


■9. Quickly open your left fist to a palm heel, and raise it to cover your face. Execute a right knife-hand strike to the face. For this technique use a slightly open version of the *sanchin* stance.

■10. Take a full step forward on your right foot, and bring your left foot behind and to the right of your right foot. Deliver a right inverted-fist strike to the face. Shout at this point.

■11. Pivoting on your right foot, swing your left foot 135 degrees to the left to get into a left forward leaning stance. Slowly, deliberately, and forcefully cross your arms in front of your chest. As you lower your arms, move into step 12.

■12. Execute a right front kick, and leave the foot out in front when you bring it down, so that you will be in the right forward leaning stance. Execute a right middle thrust and a left middle thrust in succession. Execute this double thrust as quickly as possible.



■13. Pivoting on your left foot, revolve your right foot 90 degrees to the right to get into a right forward leaning stance. Make a cross with your arms just as in step 11.

■14. Execute a left front kick. Bring your foot back to the floor out in front to get into the left forward leaning stance. Execute the same rapid double thrust that you used in step 12.

■15. Turn 45 degrees to the left to get into the left forward leaning stance. Bring your right fist to your left elbow, and execute a left middle inside block.

■16. Take a full step forward on your right foot. Get into the right forward leaning stance, and putting your left fist to your right elbow, execute a right middle inside block.

■17. Take a full step forward on your left foot. Assume the left forward leaning stance, and putting your right fist to your left elbow, execute a left middle inside block.

■18. Rapidly raise both hands to where you could grab the hair of your imaginary opponent. Keep your eyes on the tips of your own fingers.

■19. Pull back on your hands, and aim a right knee kick to the downturned face of your imaginary opponent. As you bring your right foot back down to its former position, turn 90 degrees to the left, and take a half step forward on your left foot so that you end up in the backward leaning position. Execute a knife-hand block with your right hand.

■20. Pivoting on your left foot, step forward on your right foot to put yourself in the left backward leaning stance. Execute a right knife-hand block.

At the stop signal, pull in your right foot, and assuming the stable stance, bring your hands in a crossing movement in front of you till they return to the original hand position.

yantsu

■*1. Assume the closed stance, with hands folded in front of you, left hand on top. Tense your abdomen, and stand in meditation.*

■*2. Open your eyes, and look straight forward. As you take a deep breath, bring your arms up and crossed in front of you till your open hands are almost at your ears. Lower them again till they are in the position for the stable stance. Simultaneously, bring your feet into the stable position.*

■*3. In the same stance, bring both fists forcefully into your armpits. They should be in the inverted-fist position.*

■*4. Execute an upper double-arm forefist thrust, and bring your fists back to your armpits.*

■*5. Execute a right roundhouse strike.*

■*6. Execute a left roundhouse strike.*

■*7. In the same posture, execute a right middle spear-hand thrust.*

■*8. Execute a left middle spear-hand thrust.*

■*9. After you bring your left hand into your body, stretch both arms slowly to the sides. Look straight ahead the whole time. Tense your abdomen, trapezoids, and index and middle fingers.*

■*10. Take one step forward on your right foot for a right forward leaning stance. Execute a right middle forefist thrust.*

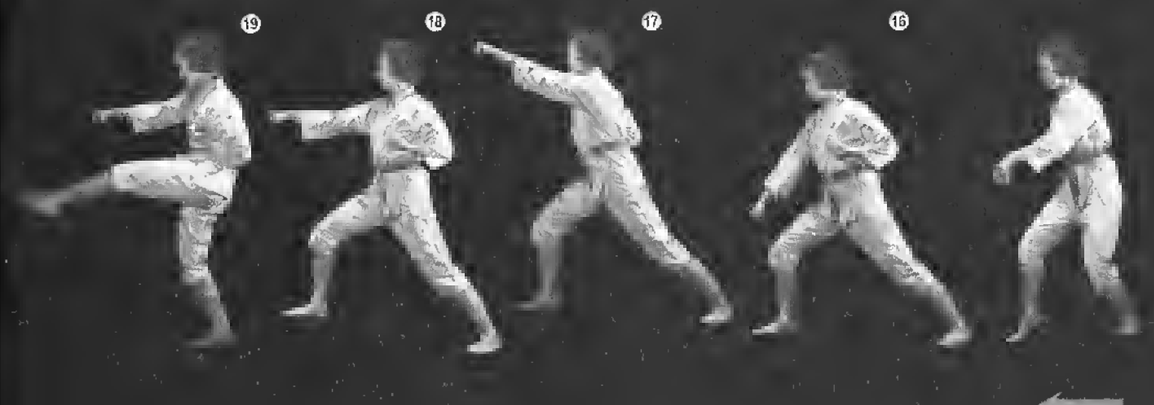
■*11. Put the thumb of your right hand at the base of your fourth finger, and execute a downward palm-heel block. Use the cat stance for this move.*

■*12. In the same stance, execute a rising block with the back of your right wrist.*

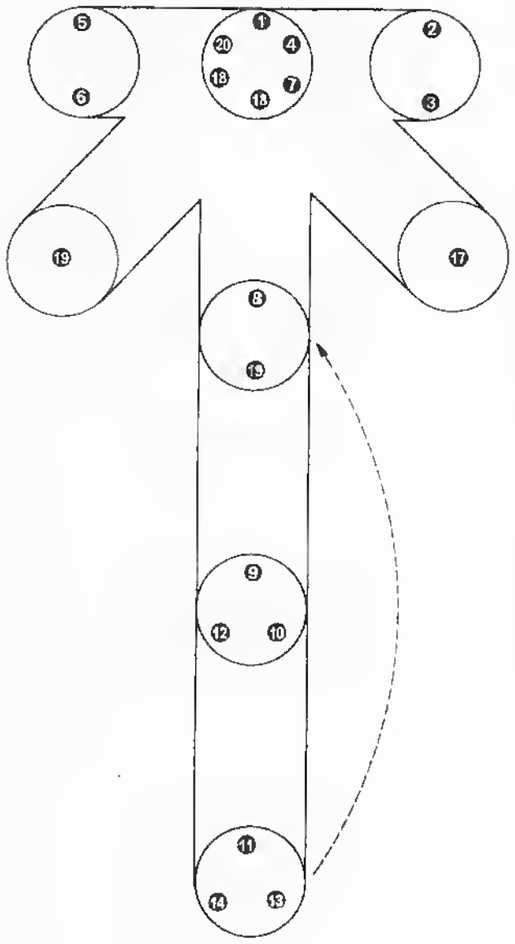
■*13. As you bring your right foot back to a normal position, take a step forward on your left foot for a left forward leaning stance. Simultaneously, execute a left middle forefist thrust.*

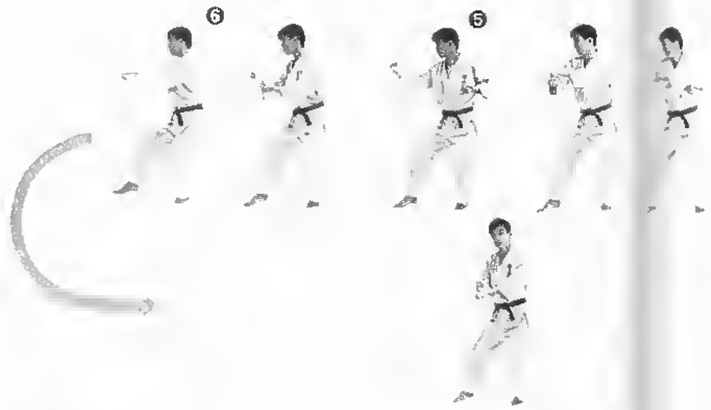
■*14. Pull your left foot back into a cat stance. Bring the thumb of your left hand into the base of your fourth finger, and execute a downward palm-heel block.*

■*15. Execute a rising block with the back of your left wrist.*



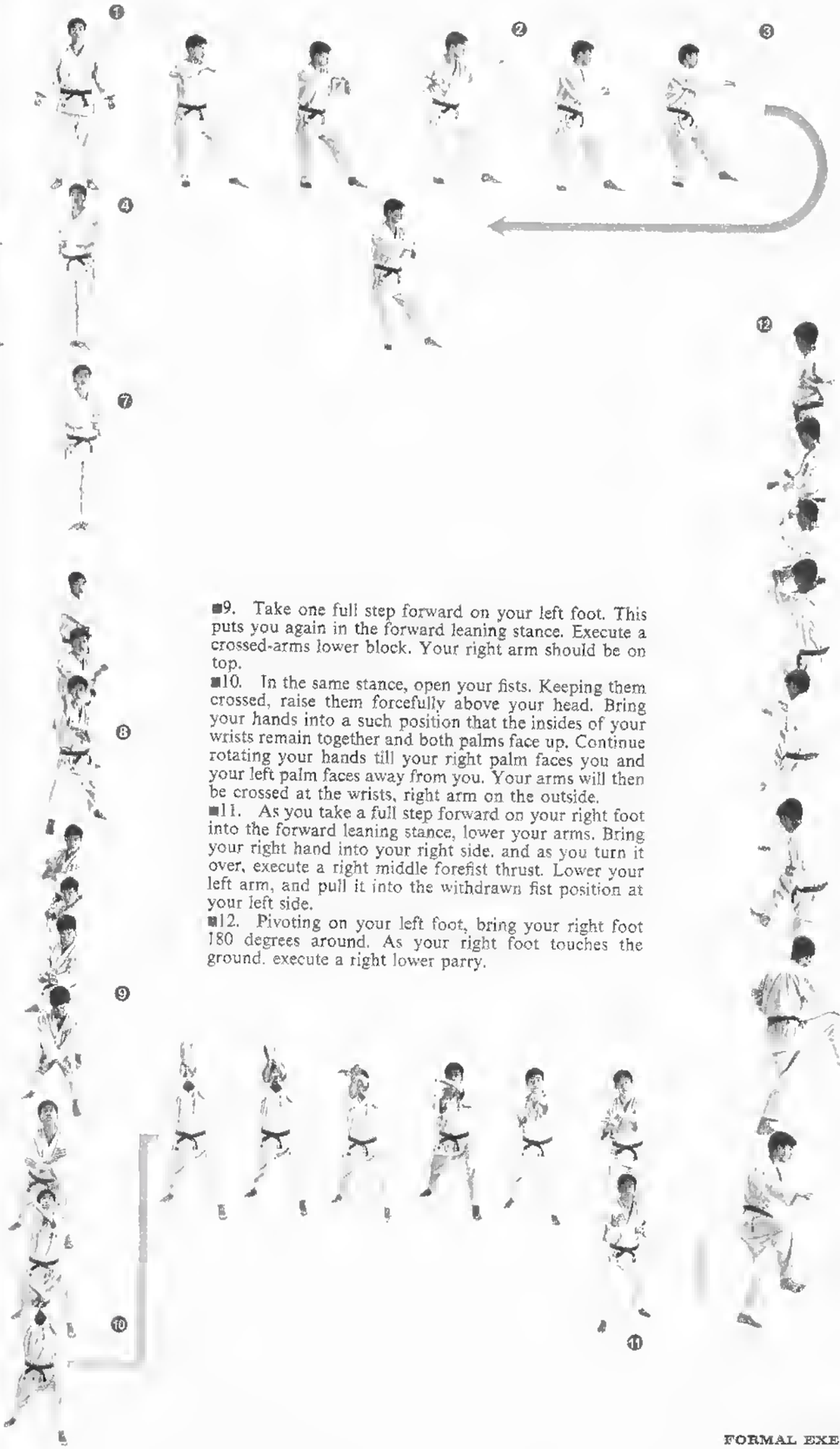
■16. *Pull your left foot back to a normal position as you take a step forward on your right foot and execute a right lower forefist thrust.*
■17. *In the same position, execute an upper left forefist thrust. Shout.*
■18. *In the same position, execute a right middle forefist thrust.*
■19. *Immediately kick forward with your left foot.*
■20. *As you bring your left foot back to a cat stance, execute a right inner-knife-hand inside block. Quietly pull your right hand back to your armpit.*
■21. *Repeat steps 11 and 12.*
■22. *Execute a driving right knife-hand strike to the collarbone of your imaginary opponent.*
■23. *Pivoting on your right foot, turn your body 180 degrees to the left, and execute a left lower forefist thrust.*
■24. *Execute a right upper forefist thrust.*
■25. *In the same stance, execute a left middle forefist thrust. Immediately kick forward with your right foot.*
■26. *Bring your right foot back to a cat stance, and with your right fist drawn into your armpit, execute a left middle inside inner-knife-hand block.*
■27. *Bring the thumb of your left hand to the base of your fourth finger, and execute a downward palm-heel block. Immediately follow this with a rising block with the back of the left wrist. Follow this with a driving left knife-hand thrust to the collarbone of your imaginary opponent.*
■28. *Slide your right foot back together with your arms in front of you, and bring them down folded in front of your abdomen, left hand on top.*
■29. *Exhale lightly, and assume the stable stance.*





pinan V

■1. Assume the stable stance; stand calm and ready.
■2. Take one half step on the left foot to the left. Assume the backward leaning stance. Execute a left middle inside block.
■3. In the same posture, execute a right middle forefist thrust.
■4. As you pull in your right foot to your left one, invert your right forefist, bring your left fist over to it, and rest the left fist edge on the inside of your right wrist. Draw both fists together in to your right side. You should now be in the closed stance.
■5. Take a half step to the right on your right foot. Assume the backward leaning stance. Execute a right middle inside block.
■6. In the same posture, execute a left middle forefist thrust.
■7. As you pull in your left foot to your right one, invert your left forefist, bring your right fist over to it, and put the right fist edge on the inside of your left wrist. Draw both fists together to your left side. Once again, you are in the closed stance.
■8. Take a full step forward on your right foot. Assume the forward leaning stance. Bring your left forefist to your right elbow as you perform a middle right inside block.



■9. Take one full step forward on your left foot. This puts you again in the forward leaning stance. Execute a crossed-arms lower block. Your right arm should be on top.
■10. In the same stance, open your fists. Keeping them crossed, raise them forcefully above your head. Bring your hands into a such position that the insides of your wrists remain together and both palms face up. Continue rotating your hands till your right palm faces you and your left palm faces away from you. Your arms will then be crossed at the wrists, right arm on the outside.
■11. As you take a full step forward on your right foot into the forward leaning stance, lower your arms. Bring your right hand into your right side, and as you turn it over, execute a right middle forefist thrust. Lower your left arm, and pull it into the withdrawn fist position at your left side.
■12. Pivoting on your left foot, bring your right foot 180 degrees around. As your right foot touches the ground, execute a right lower parry.

■13. Bring your right fist into your right side as you open your left fist out and swing your left arm straight to the left. Bring your right foot up to a position in which you can tap its sole with your left hand. As you lower your right foot, bring your right fist to the palm of your left hand, and execute a right elbow strike.
■14. As you bring your left foot behind and to the right side of your right foot, execute a straight-up strike to the chin.
■15. Jump up and around 180 degrees. Land so that your feet are crossed, left foot behind and to the right of your right foot. Execute a lower crossed-arm block.
■16. As you take one step forward on your right foot, for a forward leaning stance, bring your left fist to your right elbow, and execute a right middle inside block.
■17. Revolving on your right heel, swing your left foot 45 degrees to the left. Bringing your right hand down from your shoulder, cross your left and right arms in front of you as you clench your fists. Bring your right hand to a position behind your head and your left hand to your left side.
■18. Bring your left foot in.
■19. Take one step forward on a 45-degree angle on your right foot. Once again, crossing your arms in front of you, pull your left hand to a position above your head, and bring your right hand to your right side.
■20. As you pull in your right foot, lower your arms for the stable stance.

saiha

■1. Stand in meditation in the closed stance with your hands folded together in front of you, left hand on top. Once you feel you are completely calm, open your eyes quickly, and gaze straight ahead.
■2. As you assume the pigeon-toe stance by spreading your legs and pointing your toes slightly inward, bring both arms around in a large circular movement over your head until they are stretched slightly outward with clenched fists pointing down at your sides.
■3. Step out at a 45-degree angle on your right foot. Simultaneously bring your left foot to your right, and put your clenched right fist into the palm of your left hand. Bring both hands in to your right side.
■4. Sharply snap your right elbow outward, keeping your right fist in your left palm. Take one step to the side on your left leg. Simultaneously pull your left knife hand on a level plane to the left, and snap a right inverted-fist strike to the outside.
■5. As you put your left fist into the palm of your right hand, swing your left foot around 135 degrees to the right, then bring your right foot around to it. You will now have completely reversed directions.
■6. In the same stance, snap your left elbow sharply to the outside, keeping your left fist in the palm of your right hand.
■7. Taking a step to the right on your right foot, simultaneously pull your right knife hand on a level plane to the right, and snap a left inverted-fist strike to the outside.
■8. As you put your right fist into the palm of your left hand, swing your right foot 135 degrees to the left, then bring your left foot around to it. Once again, you will have completely reversed directions.
■9. Keeping the same stance, and holding your right fist in your left palm, snap your right elbow sharply to the outside.
■10. Repeat step 5.
■11. Bring your left foot in to your right foot, then immediately take a full step to the left on your right foot. At the same time, push upward with your left palm and downward with your right palm, looking to the right all the while. Slide your right foot to your left foot, letting only its toes touch the floor.
■12. Suddenly look to the front, and execute a right front kick.
■13. Bring your right foot down on its toes. Pull it in to your left foot, then slide it out a full step to the right. Simultaneously, push upward with your right palm and downward with your left palm, as you slide your left foot in to your right foot on its toes. This time, keep looking to the left.
■14. Suddenly look to the front, and execute a left front kick. Swing your left foot down, and take a full step to the rear as you raise both hands to about collar level in front of you.
■15. Pull both hands into your armpits, inverting them as you pull. Thrust outward with both hands in an upper double-arm forefist thrust. Note: to get your fists back into the forefist position, you must invert them again as you thrust.
■16. Open your left fist. Leaving your right fist clenched, swing both arms upward and around in a wide circle, then strike your left palm with your right fist when they are both at about navel height.

■17. Pivoting on both feet in position, reverse directions. Thrust both open hands to full arm's length in front of you. As you clench your fists, pull them in to your armpits, inverting them as you pull. Once again, invert them to deliver an upper double-arm forefist thrust. Open your right hand. Leaving your left hand clenched, swing both arms out, and bring them around full circle to strike your right palm with your left fist when both have arrived at about navel height.

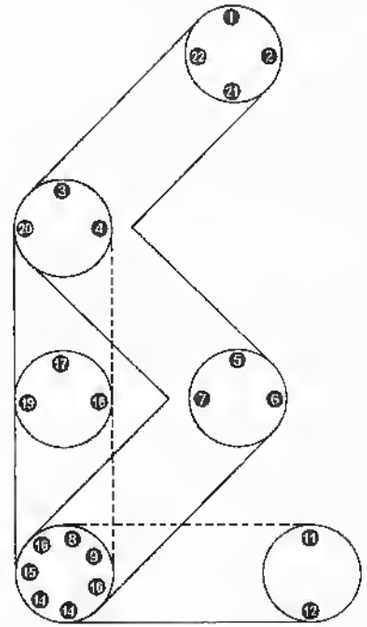
■18. Rotate your left foot in place 90 degrees. Letting your right foot sweep the floor, bring it toward, but slightly in front of, your left foot, then lift it up, and stomp it back down to its original position. At the same time, keeping your left fist drawn into your left side, execute a fast downward strike with the right fist edge. Shout at this point. Open your right fist, then gradually close it again as if you were grabbing something. As you snap your right fist back into your right side, execute a left middle inverted-fist thrust.

■19. Repeat step 18 with the opposite feet and hands.

■20. Take a full step forward on the right foot for a right forward leaning stance. At the same time, execute a left middle forefist thrust.

■21. Swing your left foot 135 degrees to the right, and as you bring your right knife hand around to just below your chin and pull your left hand in to your left side, bring your right foot together with your left foot in a cat-foot stance. Open your left fist to a spear hand, and thrust forward with it. Rotate both hands till your right palm is at about your navel facing to the left and your left hand is facing outward at about shoulder height.

■22. Bring your open hands around in front of your face then down and closed in the original position.



CHAPTER

9 basic formal practice fighting

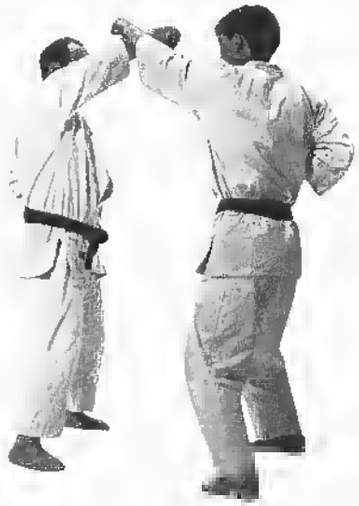
1. basic formal practice fighting

Up till now, we have studied the isolated techniques, the formal exercises, and everyone of you should be able to practice successfully in these steps independently. The next stage requires still a further actualization of what we have learned in that now we, using an actual opponent, really practice attacking and defending. Practice fights are of two kinds: regular practice fighting in which the combat is a series of set techniques, and free-style practice fighting which is literally free and which resembles a sort of match between two men.

Naturally, the beginner begins with regular practice fighting, and generally the most suitable at first is the three-step method. In this method the attacker attacks three times with the same techniques—say an upper thrust or a lower thrust—and the defender blocks three times with the same block, after which he swings into a counter attack. Repeating three-step practice fighting over and over will help you develop attack and block timing, strength distribution, and a quick eye in all the techniques so that you can then move on to the one-step practice fight, in which the movements are much faster. The three-step practice fight in this book is a most basic form in which both defender and attacker remain standing in one place throughout the technique. When you have mastered this type you can move on to the three-step methods involving waking as you thrust and block. For detailed explanations of the walking three-step practice fights and for one-step practice fights see *This Is Karate*.

1. The attacker delivers a right forefist middle thrust which the defender blocks with a left middle outside block.
2. The attacker follows up with a left forefist middle block which the defender blocks with a right middle outside block.
3. The attacker continues with a right forefist middle thrust which the defender blocks with a left middle outside block.
4. As he blocks, the defender also slams a right middle forefist thrust to the attacker's abdomen.

1. The defender blocks the attacker's right forefist middle thrust with a right middle outside block.
2. The attacker comes in with a right forefist middle thrust, but the defender blocks with a left middle outside block.
3. Same as step 1.
4. As the defender blocks, he also aims a right inverted-fist strike to the attacker's face.



1. The attacker delivers a right forefist upper thrust which the defender blocks with a left forefist upper block.
2. The attacker comes in with a left forefist upper thrust, but the defender blocks with a left forefist upper block.
3. The attacker and the defender repeat the same moves as in step 1.
4. As the defender blocks, he also throws a right forefist upper thrust to the attacker's face.

1. The defender blocks the attacker's right forefist upper thrust with a right forefist upper block.
2. The attacker comes in with a left forefist upper thrust, but the defender blocks with a left forefist upper block.
3. Both repeat step 1.
4. As the defender blocks, he also aims a right forefist middle thrust at the attacker's abdomen.

1. The attacker aims a right forefist middle thrust which the defender blocks with a left palm-heel block.
2. The attacker continues with a left forefist middle thrust, but the defender blocks with a right palm heel block.
3. Both repeat step 1.
4. As he blocks, the defender aims a right inner-knife-hand strike to the attacker's abdomen.

1. The defender blocks the attacker's right forefist upper thrust with a left knife-hand upper block.
2. The attacker comes in for a left forefist upper thrust, but the defender blocks with a left knife-hand upper block.
3. Both repeat step 1.
4. As the defender blocks he also delivers a right knife-hand strike ro the attacker's face.

2. free-style practice fight postures

After you have mastered the regular practice fights, you are ready to move on to the free-style ones, in which you can put to use all of the basic techniques you have learned. Just as a theory, regardless of how fine it may be, is useless if it is impractical, so a karate that ignores the practice fights and makes no actual use of the techniques is no more than calisthenics. Since these fights involve a good bit of danger, always observe the courtesies of the military arts, and always practice under the guidance of a good instructor.

The free-style fights are the ultimate in karate techniques, and it is impossible to explain them fully on the few pages allotted to this chapter. What we will do is to set forth the proper stances, as the fundamental preliminary knowledge.

As I have had opportunity to learn, too many karate beginners make the serious mistake of misunderstanding and confusing the stances for the regular practice fights and those for the free-style. In the regular practice fights, where each move and each following move is already known, more than the movement itself, the important thing in the stance is to stabilize the body so that you are able to accurately thrust or block. On the other hand, in the free-style fights you must always be able to attack and defend freely. Since, in this case, speed of movement is primary, you should stand with your stride at such a width that you can always instantaneously move your body. The ideal width is the width of your shoulders. If your stride is too wide, though your body is low and stable, your movements will become sluggish. If, however, your stride is too narrow, though you gain speed, you lose stability. Since if both feet are on a line and perfectly balanced an attack from the front can easily knock you over, always keep one foot in front or behind the other.

The free-style fight positions we present in this chapter are very logical and include all of the points we have just discussed. They come largely from Chinese *kempo* and have been adapted to meet the needs of karate. Be sure when you practice that you make a clear distinction between these stances and the ones you will use in regular practice fighting.

a. two-hand position

This is the position with which all beginners should start. In it both fists are clenched. In the right version your right hand is down near your diaphragm, the central vital spot of the body, and your left hand is forward ready to deliver the attack you have in mind. In the left version the positions of the hands reverse. Always keep your fists clenched, because beginners, who are not yet completely used to blocking, whose eye is not as quick, whose strength has not grown as much as it later will, and whose body is not as flexible are likely to break fingers if the hand is open. The danger of damaging your first knuckles is particularly great if you attempt to block an opponent's kick with an open hand. Usually, the hand at the diaphragm is used in blocking your opponent's kicks and thrusts with upper blocks, middle inside or outside blocks, or lower parries, but of course in some cases it also serves in forefist, reverse-fist, wrist, or elbow attacks.

The left hand, while thrusting can also serve in blocks and attacks. The stance is always the cat-foot stance, in which you put the bulk of your body weight on your rear foot and use your front foot for kicking. You should always keep your legs about shoulder width apart.

Though beginners sometimes in close-quarters fighting tend to throw or grab their opponents, in this hand position you must absolutely not open your fists. To see that the beginner does not, instructors sometimes insert a stick the size and length of a pencil in the closed fist and have their beginners fight to the end of the technique without dropping the stick. Beginners should pay particularly close attention to this position.

b. knife-hand two-hand position

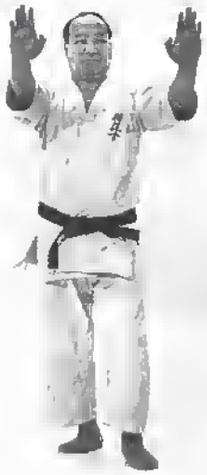
Aside from the fact that you hold both fists in a knife-hand position instead of clenched, this position is exactly like the two-hand position. With the right hand, which you hold at your abdomen, you can deliver a palm-heel block or a knife-hand block, or, in case of an attack with a roundhouse kick or a kick to the neck, you can use it in a forearm block. The left hand will serve to give you a headstart in the attack, to threaten your opponent, or in knife-hand and palm-heel blocks. You will use a cat-foot stance in this position.

c. double-layer two-hand position

In this position, you swing both arms around in circles, palms down, one above the other. You decide for yourself which hand will be in the upper position, but one should be at about diaphragm height and the other higher. In general, when we use the right version of the position, the left foot is the forefoot, and the right hand is upper.

d. two-hand swing position

One of Chinese *kempo*'s most outstanding positions, the two-hand swing is suitable for spiritual unification, and often we use it in standing Zen meditation. The distinctive feature of the position is the large swinging movement you make with both arms; in other words, making your body the axis, you swing both arms round and round on either side like windmills. In this passive position you spread your arms as far as possible as you whirl them around and make the area within the circles you draw your own inviolate territory. You do not attack.



e. spear-hand two-hand position

From the double-deck knife-hand position, move to this position by thrusting the upper hand out and turning it to the spear hand position. The Japanese name *birin-no-kamae* means the tail-scales position and derives from the fish-tail like movement we make with the upper hand.

Though this is usually an attack position, we can also use the upper hand to break our opponent's attack and block to protect the lower half of the body with the lower hand.

PART 3

APPLICATIONS

CHAPTER

10 self-defense techniques

As I have said many times, a karate man's daily spiritual attitude is most important because he must, as far as is possible, always avoid conflict. This is one of the first rules of karate. Karate daily training is designed to help us avoid individual fights.

The fact remains, however, that as society grows more complex, everyday and everywhere we hear more tales of violence and of infringements of social morality. Because we have no idea when we might ourselves run into a person bent on evil, we cannot afford to be negligent even in our intimate daily activities. To this end we need self-defense techniques, because the spiritual attitudes themselves of people who do and of those who do not know how to defend themselves are very different. A man who knows and understands how to protect himself can always maintain a natural spiritual attitude which reflects in his approach to daily life. Though he will not give an opponent chances to attack him, since he never encounters danger except when it is necessary to do so, the likelihood of his running into trouble is less than it is with a persou who cannot take care of himself.

From the viewpoint that self-defense techniques are a vital element of the martial arts, I firmly believe in their indispensability, but if your opponent attacks you and you feel yourself in danger you must also be able to confidently use the techniques you practice everyday at the training hall. At the moment of crisis, the most important thing in self-defense is to keep cool. Your opponent, in a similar situation, is likely to lose control of himself, and if you simply watch what he does and how he moves you will be able to find the weak spot in his technique. For this reason, in daily practice always aim for calm, speed, and accurate application of techniques.

Though the self-defense techniques we include in this chapter are basic and easy to use and learn, they are extremely effective. Limitations in the size of the book have made it impossible to introduce as many techniques as we should like to, but be sure you learn these few thoroughly.

1. protection against a knife

If you ever find yourself in a position where you absolutely must defend your life against someone armed with a knife, first of all, keep cool, and do not for a split second forget the knife your enemy has. Since if you protect your face and your abdomen you will not receive a fatal wound, you can, instead of merely getting away, disarm your opponent in an attack.

a.

a.

1. If your opponent attempts to stab you from the front, turn your body half to the side, protect your vital points with your left and right hands, and prepare for blocking.
2. When your opponent comes in for the stab, averting the tip of the blade, use a low right knife-hand parry from the outside to knock the knife aside.
3. Simultaneously, moving in from the outside, stop the hand holding the knife with your left hand.
4. At the same time, taking a big step inward with your left foot and opening your body to the right, pin the arm with the knife under your left arm, and twisting the wrist to the right, bend the arm.

b.

b.

1. When your opponent comes in from the front for the stab, cover your vital spots, and keep your left hand well extended to the front.
2. Stop the knife by pushing it with your left hand from the outside inward toward your opponent.
3. Simultaneously seize the wrist of the hand holding the knife in your right hand, pivoting on your right foot swing in a half circle to the right, and get your opponent's arm in a position crossing your left shoulder.
4. His elbow should be at your shoulder. Using that point as a fulcrum, bend his arm by giving it a sharp pull downward.

c.

1. Your opponent comes in from the front to stab your lower abdomen.

2. Being careful to keep away from the tip of the knife, parry the attacking hand with a left lower parry.

3. Keeping your left hand in contact with your opponent's arm, push it out and up till it rests on your shoulder. Wrap your left arm around the attacking arm, and get a reverse hold on it.

4. Press down on your opponent's elbow, and when he has bent over so that his face is in range, strike up to it with your right knee.

d.

1. Your opponent comes straight in to stab you in the chest.

2. At the instant in which he attempts to stab you, drop your body down to the left.

3. Stabilize your body with both hands. This is easier to do if your palms do not touch the floor.

4. Kick back with your right foot to your opponent's side. All four of these motions require as much speed as you can give them.

2. protection against a pistol

When, as is often the case, your opponent draws a pistol only to threaten you, the important thing is to get away from the weapon. Under all conditions, stay out of the line of the muzzle so that, even should your enemy pull the trigger, the bullet will not hit you.

a.

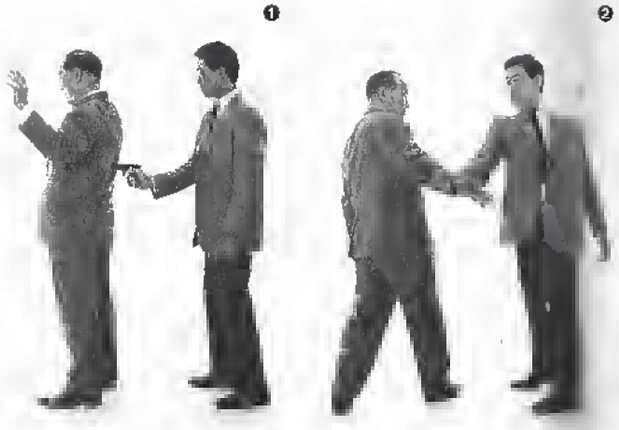
1. This technique is for use when you stand facing an opponent who has a pistol and who is, you feel fairly sure, about ready to pull it out.
2. Quickly, as you take one step inward with your left foot, use your left hand to seize your opponent by the elbow of the arm with the gun, and use your right hand to press that hand in toward his body. Avoid the muzzle of the pistol.
3. Keeping this position, aim a head strike at your opponent's face so that the upper part of his body falls backward.
4. When this happens, drive your right knee into his groin.

b.

1. When you are face-on with an enemy holding a pistol.
2. While opening your upper body to the right and taking a half step back on your right foot, be careful to avoid the muzzle of the pistol, and at the same time, seize your opponent's pistol hand with your left hand.
3. Bring your right hand around so that you hold your opponent's pistol hand in both your own. Holding tight to that hand, pivot half way around on your left foot, and bring your opponent's pistol (right) hand up to where his arm crosses your left shoulder.
4. His elbow should rest on your shoulder. Using this as a fulcrum, give his arm a good downward pull that will result in a painful wrench to his elbow.

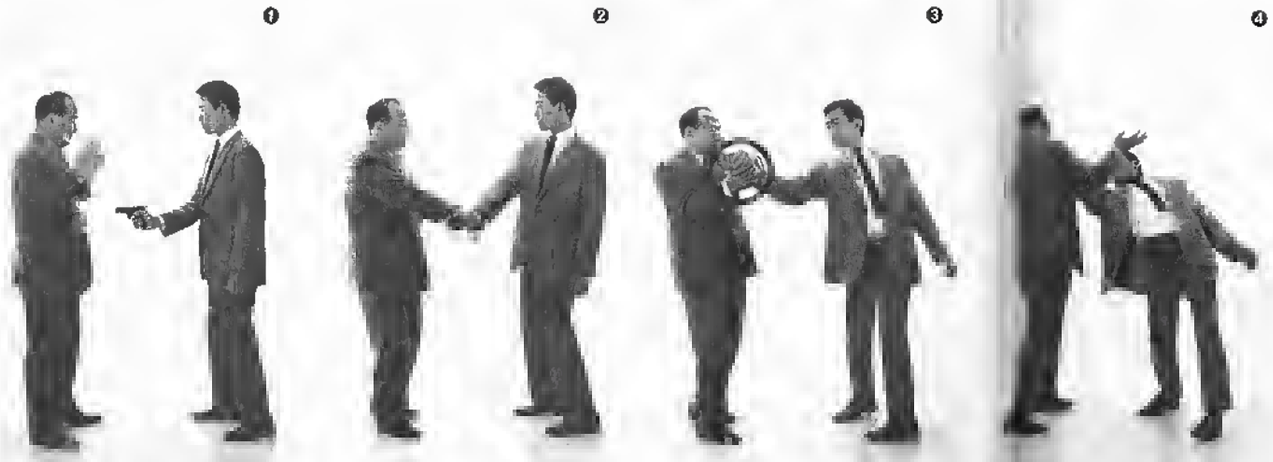
c.

1. In this instance the opponent has a pistol trained on you from behind.
2. As you take a step back on your right foot and open your body to the right, avoid the pistol muzzle, but parry it away with a low right knife-hand parry.
3. At the same time, take a step into the opponent's right side on your left foot, and catch his pistol arm firmly in the elbow joint of your right arm.
4. As you push him over backwards from this position, get a tight grip on his throat.



d.

1. Once again, an opponent is standing in front of you with his pistol on you.
2. As you parry the pistol away with a lower right knife-hand parry, avoiding the muzzle of the pistol, get ready to seize the opponent's pistol hand with your right hand.
3. Simultaneously, bring your left hand around to your opponent's pistol hand, and get a reverse hold on his wrist. As you quickly take a step inward on your left foot, twist the opponent over to his own left.
4. When your opponent is leaning over to the side, aim a right knife-hand strike to his neck.



e.

1 and 2 are the same as in c.
3. Quickly step around behind your opponent.
4. Put your left leg in his right knee joint from behind, and push him over.

a.

b.

3. other attitudes and positions

Though we live all of the time in a state of unconscious trust in those around us, we never really know when our relatives or our close friends or we ourselves will be faced with grave danger. If you are spiritually prepared to avoid danger, you will find that you will be better able to manage any danger that you might unavoidably encounter.

a.

1. You are sitting in chairs face to face, when you suddenly sense that your opponent is about to attack you.
2. First pin down both of his hands with both of yours.
3. Simultaneously aim a head strike to his face.

c.

b.

1. You and your opponent are seated opposite each other.
2. If you feel that your opponent is ready to attack, cross one leg on the other in a defense position as you see in the photograph.
3. The opponent has stood and is coming in to attack.
4. Kick your opponent in the groin.

c.

1. Your opponent has risen from his chair and has you by the collar (in this case the left lapel).
2. Take hold of your opponent's hand from the top with your left hand.
3. Bring your right hand up to your left, and at the same time, taking a step outside your opponent's right leg on your own right foot, duck under your opponent's arm as you rotate your body counterclockwise.
4. Get a reverse hold on your opponent's wrist, and bend his arm by pushing down on his elbow with your own elbow.

d.

1. If you are standing alongside someone who might do you some harm, always see that your better arm is on the outside—that is, if you are right handed you will always find it to your advantage to have your opponent on your left.
2. Should your opponent try something, you can always block with the hand that is closest to him and get the jump on him in the attack with your better arm.

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e.

1. If an opponent asks you to give him your hand when he actually is planning trouble, always staud with your left foot a half step forward.
2. If your opponent should let go of your hand and start to attack, you can do as follows.
3. Swing your whole body around in a clockwise direction, and parry your opponent's attack with your left arm.
4. It is dangerous to stand with your feet parallel in instances like these because then your opponent can easily jump into your body.

❹

4. self-defense for women

A woman who knows something of how to defend herself in a crisis is much better off than the woman who does not and who first tries to run away, because flight is often the best way to fall into your enemy's hands. A man who attacks a woman is sure to be stronger than his victim, but if the women will calmly apply the principles of the point and circle, which we explained earlier, and will learn the following few techniques, she will always be able to get away from any masher. In training you should first study and learn all of the body movements and leg actions slowly together and then try adding speed to them.

a.

1. Your attacker has grabbed you by one hand from behind (in this case the right hand). Absolutely do not attempt to move forward because in instances of this sort the arm doing the holding is stronger in backward and forward motions.
2. Close your arm tightly, keeping it close to your body, and as you pivot on your right foot 180 degrees in a clockwise direction, tense the fourth and little fingers of your right hand, and bring it down on top of your opponent's hand. Simultaneously, bring your left hand around on top of your opponent's hand, and immobilize it.
3. Bring your left elbow down on top of your opponent's already covered hand, and press up on it from below. Make sure that this action makes it impossible for your opponent to withdraw his hand.
4. Now that you have a reverse hold on your opponent's arm, should he stoop forward, kick up into his face.

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b.

1. Your attacker has you by both hands from behind.
2. Quickly open both arms to the outside, and take a step back on your left foot outside your opponent's right foot. This is an effective action because the person being held is stronger in motions to the right and left than in motions to front or back.
3. Duck back under your opponent's arm, pull your right hand back, and apply heavy pressure to his elbow with your left hand to reverse the hand hold he had on you.
4. Bend his elbow by pressing hard and firm into it with a left knife hand from above. Naturally, you must perform motions 1, 2, and 3 rapidly without letting go of your opponent's hands.

❹

c.

1. Your attacker has you by one hand (in this case the right hand). Be sure you are calm and that you tense your abdomen and keep your body in good balance.
2. Raise the captive hand, and describing a circle from the outside to the inside (counterclockwise direction), seize your opponent's wrist between your thumb and your index finger.
3. Bring your free hand around to the back of your opponent's hand, and get a firm hold on his wrist.
4. Bend his wrist severely by twisting it hard inward and by bending it down.

d.

1. Always make full use of a parasol or any other accessory you might have with you when an attacker approaches. In this case, the opponent has grabbed one of your hands (the left in the photograph) from the front. Always switch the parasol to the captive hand.
2. Swing the handle of the parasol to the outside.
3. Swing the handle around on top of the opponent's wrist, and grip farther up on the handle with your free hand.
4. Bend your attacker's wrist by giving a sharp downward tug on the parasol handle.

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e.

1. Should a masher put both arms around you and attempt to cover your mouth from behind, the first thing to do is stay calm.
2. Thrust the handle of your parasol into your attacker's throat.
3. When he flinches, thrust with your elbow into his stomach.
4. If you thrust again with the parasol into his throat you can get free.

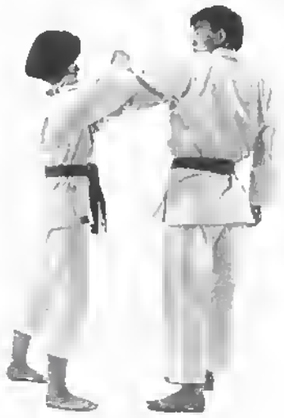
f.

1. Your attacker has you by your sleeve (right in the photograph) from the front.
2. Bring your right arm up and into your body so that it is on the inside of your opponent's arm. Bring your left hand around to the back of your opponent's hand, and get a good grip on it.
3. Keeping the hold you have with your left hand, swing your right arm around till it is outside your opponent's arm.
4. Still keeping a firm grip with your left hand, swing your right around so that you catch his arm in the crook of yours, then push up on his elbow joint.

g.

1. In this case, your opponent has you by one shoulder (the right shoulder in the photograph).

2. Bring your left hand to your opponent's hand, and grip it from the top.

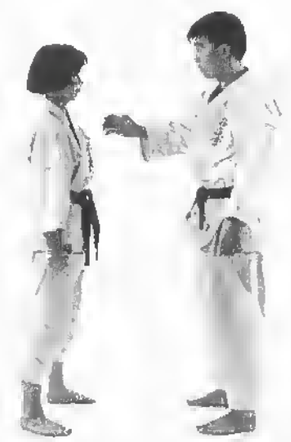


3. Simultaneously swing your right arm around on top of your opponent's elbow from the outside.

4. Down your opponent by adding a springy movement to your hips as you push his elbow downward on a diagonal to the left.

h.

1. Your attacker is about to seize your shoulder from the front.



2. As you pull the hand with which he was about to attack (right hand in the photograph), take a step forward on your left foot, and open your body to the right.

3. Slip your left shoulder under your opponent's right arm, and grab the back of his left hip. Take another step between his legs with your left foot, and knock him off balance.

4. Simultaneously down your opponent by bumping the entire weight of your body into his.

i.

1. Your opponent has you by the collar (left lapel in the photograph) from the front.
2. Pin down your opponent's hand with your left hand.
3. Take your opponent's hand in your right hand also, and pivoting on your left foot, turn your body clockwise 180 degrees.
4. Your opponent's elbow should be on your left shoulder. Bend his arm by pulling down sharply on the hand you are holding.

j.

1. Your opponent has wrapped both arms around you from behind.
2. Shake off his arms by forcefully spreading both your arms to the sides.
3. At the same time deliver a descending elbow thrust to his abdomen.
4. When he flinches, get a deep hold on his arm, and throw him with a back roll.

PART

4 APPENDIX

11. new directions in karate

CHAPTER

11 new directions in karate

1. Into the Supernatural

After my return from a trip to America, in 1953, a certain Japanese motion picture company commissioned me to make an exhibition fight with a bull. A barehand combat with a bull had long been one of my dearest wishes, and if I won I wanted to go on to fight a bear and finally a tiger because I felt that by displaying superhuman strength in defeating these powerful animals I could do much to spread karate throughout the world. I trained and studied the ways and habits of bulls, and to increase my speed I cut my weight down to 180 pounds.

Newspaper reporters and magazine writers from all over Japan gathered at the small fishing village where I was to hold the match. It rained for days, and we had to keep postponing what some of the writers called the duel of the century! Once after we announced postponement a reporter joked, "Well, Oyama, one more day to live, eh!" But I was in no mood for joking. I had just received a telegram from my young daughter saying, "Daddy, I'm praying for good luck." I had to win.

Next day the weather was good. The spectators on the beach where we were to hold the match were so excited that 20 policemen were on duty to keep order. They brought in the bull, a five-year-old giant weighing 990 pounds and boasting horns four inches in diameter.

The match was going on film, and after I got the go-ahead sign from the director, I approached the bull head-on. He was eating hay at first, but when he noticed me coming closer he looked displeased, tossed his horns once, and came charging at me. I grabbed him by both horns with both hands and pushed in on his body. The bull stretched his legs to keep from being pushed over and aimed a goring thrust of the horns at my chest. Remember this beast weighed six times as much as I and was terrifically strong.

I did not use karate on the bull right at first because I was cautious of the fierceness these animals show if you fail to get complete control of them. Once you decide to use karate, your timing from the beginning must be at its most effective, because even a calf gets out of hand if your attack is no good.

My plan was to grip the bull by the horns, throw him down, and then strike off his horn at the base with a knife-hand strike as he tried to get up again. My experience with bulls before made me believe that this was the right way to proceed.

The bull would not go down, and both my tired arms got as heavy as lead. Naturally, I was not thinking about time, but someone later told me that the first part of the fight alone took five minutes.

Suddenly the bull's strength seemed to double. He pushed in to me. I felt my hands slipping from his horns and my legs getting tangled in each other. His huge nose pushed me over, and I saw his great black head lowering down on me. A hellish pain gripped my stomach, but I managed to get away somehow from the black shadow of impending death.

The bull had gored me. My blood was spurting out. All around me the sky, the sand, the sun, everything was blindingly bright. At that instant, I felt some miraculous strength gush up from the very depths of my body. I forgot all about pain and fatigue.

In the dazzling daylight by the gleaming sea a huge black object was hurtling down on me and bringing with it my death. I had no time to think of that. I broke the bull's charge, gripped him by the horns, twined my legs in his, and tried to push him over. The bull staggered, and I could feel his soft body pressing on mine. As I felt his hard breathing and the pounding of his heart I realized that he was as exhausted as I. I threw my right hand up and let it bite knife-hand style once, twice, three, fourt times into the bull's horn. My knife hand can break 30 tiles at one blow, but it had no effect on that horn at all. The bull, enraged, bellowed and roared, and I knew that I would not have another chance. From then on, I had to be on the defensive. I kept retreating for 30 minutes, and when the bull was worn out, I turned all my strength on him. I grabbed him by the side of the head, twined my leg around his, and as he raised his legs, threw him to the sand. I wrapped my arm around the front of his head and, when he tried to stand, drove a right knife-hand strike at the base of his horn. The horn cracked with a shudder. I ripped it off and showed it to the cheering crowd. I was

the first human to barehanded break off a bull's horn. I had wagered my body and spirit on this match, and I won.

I wanted to test the limits of human ability and the great power of karate. I had no confidence that I could win; maybe I would get the bull's horns right in the front of my body. I did not know for sure, but I knew I had to win. I had to get the best of that bull for the sake of karate's glory and for the sake of my little daughter. Karate techniques did not save me from the bull's horns. it was divine protection and the absolute determination to win.

Later I downed another bull in the Denen Stadium in Tokyo, but this time the Society for the Protection of Animals forbad me to strike the beast. In my lifetime I have fought and defeated 52 bulls. Three of them died instantaneously. I have broken the horns of 48.

I went to an Ainu village in Hokkaido to train for a fight with a bear, but financial conditions deprived me of my chance. I also never was blessed with an opportunity to fight a tiger, and now I no longer have the strength I did ten years ago.

2. Preserving the Spirit of the Martial Arts

Fighting came into being at the dawn of human history and following various paths of development became the martial arts and certain sports as we have them today. Karate is certainly one of these, and when I, after having spent the last 30 years in devotion to this particular martial art, reflect on ways to insure that karate has a proper development from now on, I find that we are facing a number of problems.

One of the first problems involves arriving at a correct idea of what karate is now by re-examining its significance up to the present. Perhaps, living in a materialistic world, we tend to forget about the most important aspect of human life, man's spiritual life. Looking at modern karate, I am painfully aware of its deficiencies in the spiritual aspects. Karate, having developed as one of the modern martial arts, should be a help and guide to keep man always on a proper life path. In other words, karate should be the living way of karate, and people who set out to learn it should make it the basic element of their very lives. Your attitude toward your daily life and karate should be absolutely inseparable. Like all the other martial arts, to make human life finer and truer, karate demands strict spiritual training. Let us take a look at what that training is.

In a word, this training fosters in man a strong will. A karate follower should have a will so strong that if honesty and truth are at stake, he will count his own life as nothing. Will power of this degree of strength can make flames cool and can enable a person to bath under the icy waters of a waterfall in winter and not be chilled.

According to a famous Japanese historian, in the late sixteenth century, in what is called the period of the warring states, a certain group of soldiers set fire to a mountaintop Zen temple because the monks of that temple had given shelter to defeated soldiers of an opposing group. The undaunted priests gathered in front of the statue of the Buddha and held services just as they always did. Till the very end, inside the temple engulfed in flames, these monks sat saying, "If your mind and heart are clear of all thoughts, even the flames will be cool." These men had will power that transended death. Even brought to this pass, they kept their souls in order.

It is will power like this that overcomes all things, that is the true spirit of the martial arts, and that is essential if we are to preserve the true spirit of karate.

3. Unification of Karate Schools

As a karate instructor I am opposed to breaking karate up into the almost countless schools that exist in the world today, because basically karate is one, and regardless of how you change words around in explaining it, the thing itself does not change. Moreover, since karate devolved as a martial art, I am against anything which, though called karate, is actually no more than calisthenics. When Gichin Funakoshi came to Japan, in 1923, he was an Okinawa school teacher. He had incorporated Okinawan *te* techniques into the calisthenics his students at school used, and the combination of the two elements was the beginning of the karate that he brought into this country.

Later, after further research had gone into Japanese jujutsu, Chinese *kempo*, and Korean *chabi*, karate became less a means of training the body alone and more an actual fighting art. Today many schools attempt to convince us that a type of calisthenics is the real karate and refuse to engage in matches with other schools because they feel they must keep their own methods secret. Of course, such diligence in protecting the school and in elevating the importance of the master of the school and of a perpetuation of some sort of secret tradition is the one great cancer that prevents progress toward the proper and desirable unification of karate schools.

To overcome this roadblock, ten years ago, I called for a great meet of all karate men in the country, but no one had the courage to take me up on it. The fundamental truth of karate is one. If we were to bring all karate schools together and give full play to the good points in each, karate could make great progress. I regard doing this as my own future duty.

I mentioned before the importance of preserving the martial-arts nature of karate, but I also feel it is essential that we do all we can to revise karate along the sports line. The modernization of karate depends on these two elements: preserving the martial-arts spirit and rationalizing the training methods, the matches, the grading system, the training halls, and equipment.

Take the karate training suit as an example. In fact, this is only an adaptation of the judo training suit and is not the most perfectly suited garment to karate training or matches. Devising a proper karate garment is a question of importance particularly since we lack any historical precedent for one in either Okinawan *te* or Chinese *kempo*. I feel that in the future it will be important to include certain protective equipment in the karate training suit.

We also have plenty of room for more scientific research into karate training methods. For instance, the thrust into the straw sheaf has always been the major thrusting practice method. I introduce it in this book, but my latest studies have convinced me that perhaps training in practice fighting is a better method. The straw-sheaf method develops powerful arm muscles and is good in helping you time your strike, but it tends to slow down your movement. I am constantly studying new methods and old methods from new angles. You will find more detailed treatments of techniques to use against an opponent and of such special techniques as the stone-breaking *tameshiwari* in *This is Karate* and later in a projected volume on special karate techniques.

4. Women and Karate

Karate is usually thought of as a man's martial art, and indeed the power of the stone-breaking techniques and the speed of practice fighting do belong more to the masculine than to the feminine world. Nonetheless, we have had a number of women students at our training hall, and I believe we have developed ways to make karate perfectly suitable to their needs.

We do not have our women students practice thrusts into the straw sheaf or do much stone-breaking because these things could do injury to their hands. We concentrate on empty-hand thrusting, the forms, and practice fighting to develop both speed and strength.

Women who study karate find that it is not only a perfect method of self-defense, it is also fine health and beauty training because it helps develop and tone the muscles and promotes balance and smart, lively motion.

5. New Match Methods

Though fights are as near the real thing as we can come in training, people who watch karate matches probably find stopping all of the thrusts and blows before any actual contact is made boring. On the other hand, if we did not stop the blows in time, a match could result in death. To make the matches more interesting I am considering ways to revise the karate practice suit and to include such protective equipment as glove-like padding on the hands and feet.

Although matches do not permit comparisons of destructive power, since such power is one of karate's main features in actual combat, it would not be amiss to devise contests that did permit such comparisons. Oriental warriors, considering it contemptible to make a display of one's own strength, have come to scorn the stone-breaking *tameshiwari* techniques as ostentation. Naturally, as time passed and the actual combat, in which such warriors preferred to show their strength, fell out of existence, opportunities to display one's power became fewer and fewer, and karate matches lagged in interest. To permit fair judgment of a karate man's powers and to make the matches more interesting and convincing we need parallel developments of both practice fight contests and *tameshiwari* contests.

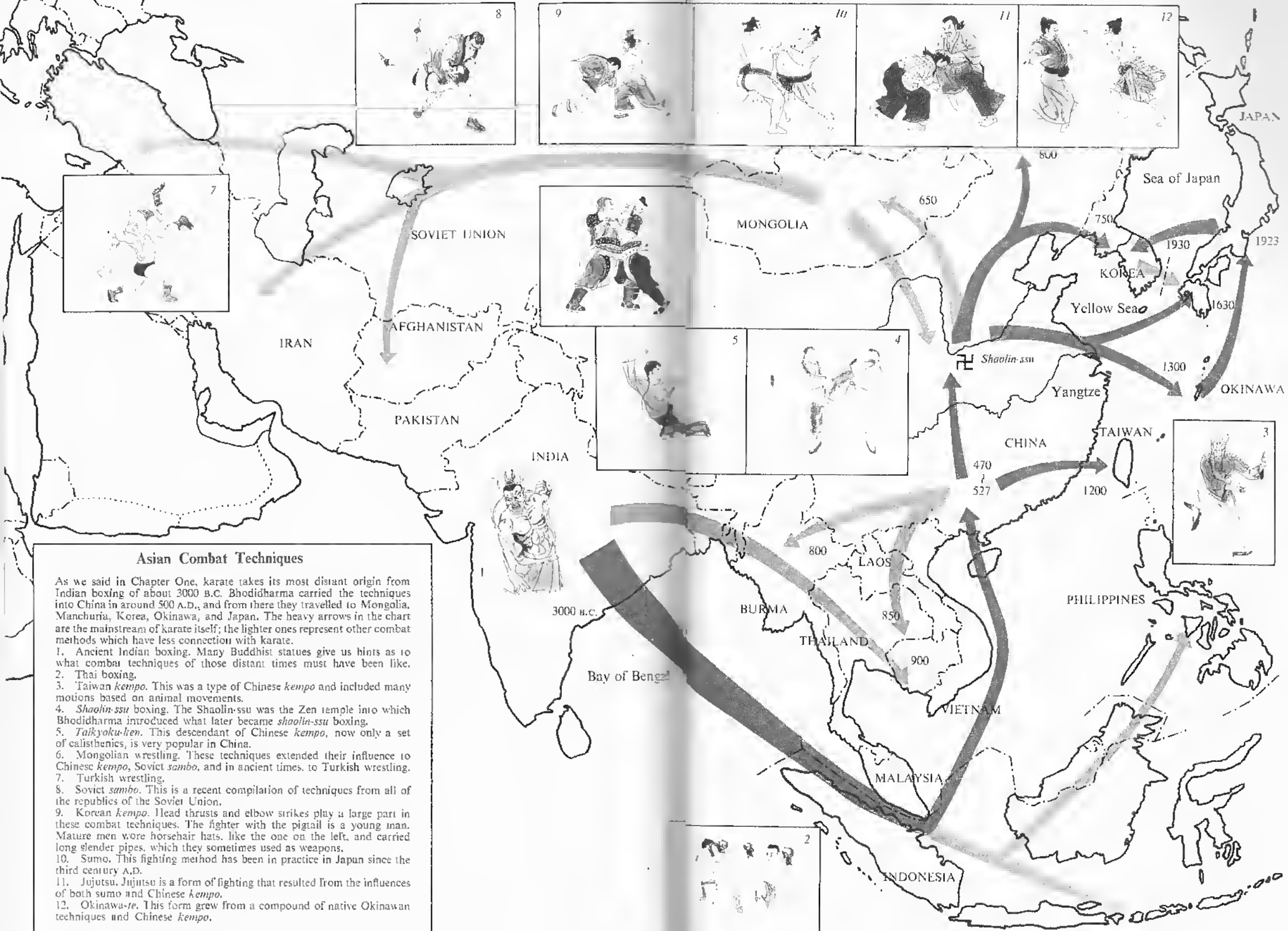
After my experience with *tameshiwari* matches in America I have set the rules, management, and order for them and intend to develop the method even further after the karate meet to be held in November, 1966.

If we put our imagination to it, a match involv-

ing the *tameshiwari* techniques is really very simple. Each karate man decides on the technique with which he feels he can break the most of a given substance and then takes several trials at it. We divide the types of strikes into four categories: (1) forefist, (2) knife hand, (3) elbow, (4) front kick. We could use 1/2-inch boards for breaking materials, or it might be possible to make a standardized industrially produced breaking material.

6. Progress in the Grade System

Up till now I cannot say that the method of increasing a man's karate standing has been totally equitable throughout the world. Because matches and judging have been unavailable to people living in areas where there is no karate branch office. The plethora of different schools of karate has been a confusing factor also, but the Kyokushinkai, with the largest membership and the greatest number of branch offices, is organized so that anyone in any country and in any school of karate can advance in grade if he has the qualifications. People living where there are no branch offices can become a special member of the Kyokushinkai and undergo judging on film if they will mail three photographs and US$3.00 to the Kyokushinkai Headquarters, 3-9, 3-chome, Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo, Japan. I think the grade system needs revising so that it will be more equitable to all.



Asian Combat Techniques

As we said in Chapter One, karate takes its most distant origin from Indian boxing of about 3000 B.C. Bhodidharma carried the techniques into China in around 500 A.D., and from there they travelled to Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, Okinawa, and Japan. The heavy arrows in the chart are the mainstream of karate itself; the lighter ones represent other combat methods which have less connection with karate.

1. Ancient Indian boxing. Many Buddhist statues give us hints as to what combat techniques of those distant times must have been like.
2. Thai boxing.
3. Taiwan *kempo*. This was a type of Chinese *kempo* and included many motions based on animal movements.
4. *Shaolin-ssu* boxing. The Shaolin-ssu was the Zen temple into which Bhodidharma introduced what later became *shaolin-ssu* boxing.
5. *Taikyoku-ken*. This descendant of Chinese *kempo*, now only a set of calisthenics, is very popular in China.
6. Mongolian wrestling. These techniques extended their influence to Chinese *kempo*, Soviet *sambo*, and in ancient times, to Turkish wrestling.
7. Turkish wrestling.
8. Soviet *sambo*. This is a recent compilation of techniques from all of the republics of the Soviet Union.
9. Korean *kempo*. Head thrusts and elbow strikes play a large part in these combat techniques. The fighter with the pigtail is a young man. Mature men wore horsehair hats, like the one on the left, and carried long slender pipes, which they sometimes used as weapons.
10. Sumo. This fighting method has been in practice in Japan since the third century A.D.
11. Jujutsu. Jujutsu is a form of fighting that resulted from the influences of both sumo and Chinese *kempo*.
12. Okinawa-*te*. This form grew from a compound of native Okinawan techniques and Chinese *kempo*.

author's note

In the ten years since the first edition of What Is Karate? *made its initial hit appearance on the sports publications scene, it has sold over 150 thousand copies to karate fans everywhere. Naturally, we have received floods of opinions and requests concerning this book, and we too have long wanted to completely revise it to more closely suit the needs of our readers. Now, we have been given just that chance. Everything—photographs, layout, text—in this edition of* What Is Karate? *is completely new!*

One of the most recurrent requests from overseas has been that we make this book one that beginners could use in individual study. To that end, this time, we have paid special attention to explaining such things as the ibuki *breathing and the formal exercises.*

We feel sure that this is the finest karate book on its level available, but we also know that it is not perfect. If any of our readers have comments or criticisms to make, we sincerely hope that they will let us know about them.

Remaking this book has been an enjoyable experience because it has given us the opportunity to work in close harmony with the publisher's editorial staff who made many invaluable suggestions. To them and to our many karate friends in other countries who also offered assistance we express our deep gratitude.

THE AUTHOR

Tokyo, 1966

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Masutatsu Oyama

About the Author: Masutatsu Oyama, born in Korea in 1923, began studying Korean *kempo* at the age of nine. He graduated from middle school in Seoul and came to Japan to study at an aviation school, in 1938. He first undertook to master Kodokan judo, but later switched to karate, in which he made such amazing progress that at 17 he was second *dan* (grade) and at 22, fourth *dan*. While he was enrolled at the Takushoku University, he was drafted into the military.

In 1947, immediately after the War, Oyama won the All-Japan Karate Championship and then retired to the mountains where he lived alone practicing strict physical and psychological discipline. When he returned to civilization, for the want of sufficiently powerful opponents, he decided to do battle with wild animals.

In 1952, he travelled to America to represent the karate world of Japan. While there, he proved to thousands of people in over 200 exhibitions how astounding the power of karate is. He also set a new record for undefeated contests with some of America's most noted boxers and wrestlers. When he returned to Japan, in 1953, he engaged in unarmed battle with a bull sporting horns four inches in diameter. After a fierce struggle, Oyama snapped one of the bull's horns off at the root. This feat of strength amazed the entire world, but it was only the beginning of a long series of such thrilling contests for Oyama. In his lifetime, he has battled 52 bulls. He has dealt sudden death to 3 of them and has broken the horns off of 48. No other man has ever surpassed his record for smashing a stack of 30 roofing tiles or two bricks with a single blow.

Through writing books on the subject and through training young karate men all over the world Masutatsu Oyama has introduced this exciting martial art to over 350 thousand people in 180 training halls in 43 nations.

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